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THE MAN OF SORROWS AND THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM

JAMES · CULROSS · D.D.

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THE MAN OF SORROWS.

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THE MAN OF SORROWS

AND

THE JOY THAT WAS SET BEFORE HIM.

Isaiah liii.

An Exposition and an Argument.

BY

REV. JAMES CULROSS, D.D.

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A blind man and a seeing man were once discussing the existence of sight. The seeing man told the blind man that he had a faculty by which he could perceive innumerable things which he could neither hear, touch, smell, nor taste, and which were at a great distance from him. The blind man challenged the seeing man to prove his assertions. "That," said the seeing man, "is easily done. Hold me by the hand. You perceive that I am standing by you. I affirm that if you will walk fifty steps along the side of this wall, which you can touch with your hand, so as to be sure that you are moving straight on, you will find such and such objects which I specifically describe, and as to the existence of which you can satisfy yourself by your own fingers." The blind man readily admitted that the seeing man had proved his assertion.

Sir James Stephen.

THE MAN OF SORROWS.

CHAPTER I.

Esaiah liii. in its Setting.

HAT *God is*, is a first truth, lying at the foundation of all religion. It seems a postulate of my very existence. Being what I am, and placed where I am, I cannot think without "thinking" God. He may be incomprehensible—it has not been left to agnosticism to tell us *that*—but He is a necessity. It takes an education to deny Him.

His works tell us what He is. The

heavens declare His glory, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. That which may be known of Him is manifest, for He hath "shewed it." Just as the invisible soul of man is seen in his face, movements, and actions, so with God: the invisible things of Him, even His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly "seen," being understood by the things which are made. Thus is He manifested in all Nature to the most untaught; and how much more wondrously to the eye and the heart of reverent science.

Yet this Nature-revelation is insufficient. It leaves our greatest questions and our most dread unanswered. Nature, so to speak, strives to utter God's name; but cannot speak plain. Where our need is sorest, Nature is dumb.

Has God ever *spoken* to man? No one who believes in a living God—and not an impersonal force—can think this impossible.

No one who believes in a God interested in His creatures can think it improbable. No one who believes in Him as a righteous moral governor can help regarding it as a necessity. Indeed, to ask the question is to ask if God is God. A voiceless God, dwelling in eternal silence, were an awful dream.

The Bible throughout asserts that God *has* spoken. Not indeed directly, but mediately. He has done so in manifold ways. In symbol and priesthood and sacrifice, in mystic whisperings to the conscience, but chiefly through the prophets. Not once only has He spoken, and once for all, but again and again, in portions and by degrees, according to the needs of men, till in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son. And He has spoken to all generations, as if the words came from His lips to our ear, or were traced before every man's eye, on his chamber-wall, by a finger of fire.

His manner of conveying His thought to the prophet's soul is left in mystery. Were we prophets, we could perhaps explain—perhaps not. But it was in such a manner that the prophet could report, "Thus saith the Lord." "God speaketh . . . in a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed." How strange! It may make it less strange if we remember that it is a shorter road out of sleep into the presence of God than out of the world of waking activities. Starting into sudden consciousness in the night-time, the excitement of the day all gone, and the darkness full of God, some eternal truth will shape itself to us with awful self-revealing clearness, and a voice will be heard in the chambers of the soul, which we know to be Divine. The idea of God speaking to the prophet in dream or trance, therefore, is not utterly surprising; it is in keeping, though

not the same thing, with some of our own deepest experiences.*

How the prophets knew that it was God who spoke to them, and not their own fancy, they nowhere tell us: perhaps they could not—as a child cannot explain how he knows his father's voice: but unhesitatingly they claim that words they speak are God's words. Having heard God's voice, they could not be silent: a Divine impulse compelled utterance. "His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." It was with the prophet as Christ promised it should be with His disciples, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you;" hence they uttered words of whose depth and vastness of

* Compare, *e.g.*, what Wordsworth says about a "serene and blessed hour," when the senses sleep and the soul is able to look into the life of things.

sweep they themselves were not aware—being "moved"—borne onward—"by the Holy Ghost."

The prophet thus stood forth as the Divinely-chosen messenger to his generation. No soothsayer or fortune-teller, but God's spokesman. No sage, calculating the future from the present—as Burke foretold the French Revolution. Even when dealing with the temporary and local, he disclosed great principles of permanent and universal application for all mankind—the moral hinges on which human destinies turn. Earlier prophetic announcements, too, became texts of which after announcements were the unfolding. As Edward Irving says, "The Word of God is as a seed, in which the whole majestic form or various parts of the future oak lie undisclosed, ready to reveal themselves according to their time, seasons, and circumstances: there is no break, leap, or start; its course

proceeds by a slow and sweet and beautiful progression."

In reaction from the narrow view which restricted prophecy to "foretelling," a tendency has risen to ignore prospective outlook altogether, or to confine it within the narrowest limits. This tendency is as mistaken as that from which it is the recoil. In particular, it is impossible to compare the Old and New Testaments without perceiving the "Christward" look of prophecy:—"to Him give all the prophets witness." Not only was there an ever-brightening disclosure made of the Divine character and attributes and method of government, but likewise of that coming Redeemer,* in whom the Divine purpose of grace was to be fulfilled — as Milton sings,—

"Far off Thy coming shone."

* "Prope omnis pagina nihil aliud sonat quam Christum, et ecclesiam toto orbe diffusam."—*Augustine*, referring to the Old Testament.

One great chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, stands pre-eminent among the prophetic writings. Luther held that every Christian ought to be able to repeat it by heart. It is prelude to much that is most distinctive in New Testament doctrine, and is the root from which not a little of the thinking of Christian ages has grown. Its phraseology has entered largely into Christian speech, and it has supplied more texts to the Gospel preacher than any other portion of the Old Testament. There are individual phrases in it resembling peaks, from which we faintly descry vast realms of truth which we cannot yet explore, but which shine with a mystic light whose source is Divine. Beyond question, this chapter is the heart of the Hebrew prophetic writings. It embraces and harmonizes the ideas contained in such seemingly discrepant predictions as Psalms ii., xxii., lxix., lxxii., and cx.; and from the standpoint which it furnishes

we are enabled to see the consistency of Messianic prophecy throughout.

Elsewhere indeed we find greater splendour of language, force of passion, wealth of imagery, and imaginative elevation, but nowhere so full, minute, and vivid forth-shewing of God's purpose. Truths elsewhere seen in twilight and transitory glimpses here stand forth for calm inspection in the light of day. Elsewhere we find line or touch or feature in keeping with what is here; but nowhere so complete and finished a portraiture. It is as if the prophet had shaded and filled up with colours the outlines elsewhere given. The hints of One passing through shame and suffering to victory, which elsewhere appear as "dark sayings," here kindle into a great life-filled picture, in which we see not only His surpassing sorrow, but also the mystery of its meaning, and the glory which finally comes of it. Not merely is there broad out-

line, but also those more delicate lines and contours which give perfect individuality to the portrait. The chapter holds much the same place in Old Testament prophecy that the narrative of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection holds in New Testament history; and with this chapter all Hebrew prophecy as a Divine thing stands or falls.

If we take two well-known writings, like Baxter's *Saints' Rest* and Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, we at once feel that different sets of faculties are addressed by them. The meaning of words and the rules of grammar are the same; but the soul of the two books is so different that we could not read both aloud in the same tone of voice without a sense of incongruity. Just so, we cannot examine this prophecy exactly as we should examine any other ancient writing, like a Tragedy of Euripides, or the Odes of Horace. Isaiah makes appeal to another side of our being, and no one can really

enter into his thoughts apart from a quickened spiritual nature, a heartfelt consciousness of sin, and what I may call a sense of God.

It is outside my purpose to discuss the question of authorship or date of writing. I wish simply to interpret the prophecy itself, taking it as an ancient Hebrew writing, universally admitted to have been penned centuries before our Saviour's birth; and then to ask a candid judgment on its Christian bearings.

It is usual for evangelical commentators first to satisfy themselves from the New Testament that Jesus of Nazareth is the subject, and then to proceed to the interpretation, drawing their illustrations from the four Gospels. It may serve important purposes to read the chapter afresh, not forgetting the New Testament—that is impossible—but simply giving the words their full meaning, *without pronouncing whose the portrait is till we have carefully examined it.*

If it is a prophecy of our Lord, the observer will see this for himself without argument.

The chapters xl. to lxvi. form a single prophecy. It does not indeed flow on in even current like a history, but has a desultory appearance; and it is only after patient study that the first sense of confusedness is got over, and we perceive its magnificent and harmonious completeness, as it rounds itself into one glorious vision. Many years ago it was pointed out that the prophecy divides into three parts of nine chapters each; ch. xl.-xlviii. closing with the refrain, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, to the wicked;" ch. xlix.-lvii. closing with a like refrain; and lviii.-lxvi. closing with words of doom, in which the earlier *Woe* is broadened out. Each of these main divisions has its distinct key-note. The first is redemption from captivity; the second, the vicarious suffering of the Lord's Servant; the third, the blessed

condition and prospects of restored Israel, with the Gentiles, now united in the common worship of Jehovah. These divisions, though not marked by strict historical sequence, could not be made to change places. None is complete in itself, or can be taken alone; each requires the other two—as the tubes of a telescope must all be in use for perfect vision. Each division consists of nine sections, roughly corresponding to the chapters in our English Bible. These sections in turn go into trilogies. Each section has a distinct personal identity, somewhat like the paragraphs in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. The fifty-third chapter (which properly begins with lii. 13) is exactly in the middle of the book, the axis round which the whole prophecy revolves, both in thought and structure.*

* Compare that song of Hebrew patriotism, Ps. cxxxvii., and mark how the name *Jerusalem*, which is in the singer's heart, is also in the heart of the song—the middle word of the middle verse. Her very dust was dear.

The subject of the chapter is the Servant of Jehovah. A servant is one who carries out the will of another; with which, however, his own will may fully coincide. He may be conscious of his calling, and may work with a purpose; or he may serve without knowing or meaning it—like Cyrus undesignedly fulfilling God's pleasure. He may work under compulsion, or under a sense of duty, or for reward, or freely, and for love's sake—like a son. One who is under no obligation to do so may step down from a position of independence, and serve spontaneously. Nay, he may be the equal or even the superior of him who receives the service—the only inferiority being that of office. The term as employed throughout this prophecy attributes to Jehovah the place of supremacy: it is His will that is carried out. Though not called "Messiah," the personality is the same as in Messianic predictions elsewhere; and the

choice of the name *Servant* seems to be determined by the work which He is represented as accomplishing. The two pictures —of the glorious Messianic King and of the Servant—unite, like the two pictures in a stereoscope. "Servant" is the key-word of the Gospel of Mark.

CHAPTER II.

The Mission of the Lord's Servant.

IX centuries and a half before the Christian era, a confused and terrific struggle was going on in Western Asia from the mountains of Elam to the Nile, the prize at stake being the dominion of the ancient world. The struggle extended over many years. It is difficult to trace the alliances that were formed and broken in the course of those years, and the political and military movements ; but the issue was that the centre of gravity of the old world was shifted to

Babylon. Assyria, Egypt, and all the lesser powers went down before the terrible armies of Babylon under their great king Nabopolassar and his greater son Nebuchadnezzar—as if all Europe, after years of fierce conflict, should succumb to some gigantic military despotism, based on what Grote calls "the unbounded command of naked human strength."

It was in this struggle that "the captivity" took place, which is the great turning-point of Old Testament history. Once and again the Babylonian power had put its hand down upon the kingdom of Judah, and carried off men and spoil; till finally Nebuchadnezzar came against it in person, swept the land, seized the fenced cities, captured and sacked Jerusalem, burned it with fire, broke down its walls, and with the exception of a few peasants left to till the ground and gather the fruits, carried away the surviving inhabitants

of the land in a drove, like a huge slave coffle, to Babylon—as had been foretold by Isaiah to king Hezekiah.

The land from which the captives were torn was "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;" their new home was a great, moist, steaming plain, through which noiseless rivers stole in sluggish flow, no purple peak cleaving the sky, no glen with cool recesses in its bosom, no "streams that murmur as they run"—the mere scenery depressing in the extreme to the spirit of free-born mountaineers. In the cities and villages of that "strange land," amidst shameful idolatry, they were forced to dwell, exiles exposed to humiliation and scorn. By the rivers of Babylon they sat down, yea, and wept when they remembered Zion. The chosen nation seemed to be cast aside as a broken vessel. The great hopes that had

lived for ages were to all appearance stamped out, and there seemed to settle over them as a nation the very gloom of despair. Humanly speaking there was nothing for them but to melt away,—like April snow in the warm sun —or to become absorbed in the surrounding tribes, in either case becoming nationally extinct. In these circumstances this great prophecy (ch. xl.-lxvi.) would be to faithful souls something like what the Book of Revelation afterwards was to Christ's saints in dark and evil days,—inspiring courage, patience, and hope.

At the end of seventy years, in a manner so unexpected that they seemed to themselves like men that dream, the weary, songless captivity was brought to an end by the decree of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, B.C. 538, and the exiles, now cured of their idolatrous tendencies, were free to return to their father-land. The deliverance was as great an event

as the Exodus had been. It meant the replanting of God's "vine" in its ancient soil, and had moral and spiritual results of the most far-reaching kind for the whole world.

Now in approaching the fifty-third chapter, we must travel along the line pursued in the book from ch. xl. to lii. 12. The land has been lying desolate for well nigh seventy years, and "Jacob" as a nation seems on the point of extinction. The daughter of Zion sits—

"With dust on her forehead and chains on her feet."

Suddenly a voice is heard announcing that the ancient ruins shall be rebuilt. Jehovah is about to return to His abode in Jerusalem. The heralds sent before Him are already visible upon the mountains; the watchmen already lift up their voice, and proclaim the fact; and the waste places are summoned to

rejoice and sing together, because Jehovah has comforted His people and redeemed Jerusalem.

While one voice bids Jerusalem and her ruins rejoice, another addresses the exiles in Babylon, and calls them to go forth and return to their fatherland. Bearing with them "the vessels of the Lord," of which the Temple had been spoiled by Nebuchadnezzar, and which were restored by Cyrus, they are to keep themselves "clean," touching no defiled thing. They are not to leave Babylon as their fathers had left Egypt, in haste and by flight, but with calmness, deliberation, and solemn joy, as God's "sacramental host," their confidence being this: "Jehovah will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rereward." It is at this point that the fifty-third chapter links itself on.

The chapter goes into three divisions: first, *The Ecce Homo of Jehovah, introducing His*

Servant (lii. 12-15); second, *The soliloquy of penitents who at first rejected but afterwards recognized the Servant* (liii. 1-10); and third, *Jehovah's prediction of His Servant's final glory* (liii. 11, 12). Whatever the *application* of the name "Servant," there is general agreement as to text and translation.

In speaking of the future, it was obviously necessary that the prophet should employ the language and imagery of the age in which he lived, or of familiar history; otherwise the prophecy would be in an unknown tongue to his contemporaries. Equally the language must be intelligible to the distant future. Both conditions are fulfilled in the prophecy.

The earliest mention of Jehovah's Servant occurs in xli. 8, in connection with the question, *Who is God?*

When pleading with the Lord for Sodom, Abraham said, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" To Abraham the Lord

was no mere local or tribal deity, like the gods of the heathen, but *the Judge of all the earth*. From that day the claim of sole and absolute supremacy for Jehovah had never been abated or obscured, but, on the contrary, had been again and again re-asserted (in the time of Elijah, for example) as against the no-gods that usurped His place. In Isaiah xl., the chapter before this, His supremacy is grandly set forth. He commands His prophet to announce the close of the long captivity, and the return of Jehovah to Zion. All obstacles are cleared away before His face. Every valley is exalted; the mountains are made low, the crooked places are made straight and the rough places plain; and His glory is revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. Not only is He faithful to His word, but He is able to fulfil it: the generations of men fade and perish like grass: *His word* shall stand for ever. In His com-

ing He shall manifest pity and tenderness; He shall gather the lambs in His arm, and shall gently lead them that are giving suck. His greatness is shewn in such examples as these: He has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand; He has meted out heaven with the span; He has comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure; He has weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance. All the nations—Egypt, Babylon, Persia, with all their vast resources—are no more to Him who holds the waters in His hollow palm than a drop in a bucket, or the small dust that alights on a balance but does not disturb its equilibrium. He is an infinite Being—infinite in His power, in His understanding and wisdom, in His majesty, and in the range of His sovereignty. Israel's way may be hid from herself; she may seem to herself as a ship plunging forward in the dark in an unknown sea; but

she must not conclude that her way is hid from her God. He is the everlasting God, Jehovah, He who was and is and shall be, *the* Being who can say I AM, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not neither is weary. He gives power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength.

The Lord now summons the isles and the peoples to come before Him for the settlement, at the bar of reason, of the question, *Who has a right to claim deity?* Is it Jehovah, who fulfils His anciently-declared purposes, or is it the idols, which cannot walk on their own feet, or even stand, without being nailed? This test is proposed: Who raised up one from the East, whom He calleth in righteousness to His foot, to become the conqueror and ruler of nations, and the deliverer of Israel? Is not this the doing of Jehovah, in fulfilment of His word? Can

any but Jehovah both foretell and bring to pass? The idolaters cannot help seeing this, and in their consternation all they can do is, to call to each other to pluck up heart, and to employ carpenters and goldsmiths "to make a particularly good and strong set of gods, because there is a general alarm that the emergency is great"*—just as men with a failing cause furbish up and put a new face upon old arguments. At this point Jehovah turns to Israel with the words: "But thou, Israel, art My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham My friend"—*i.e.*, My lover. To be Jehovah's servant in carrying forth His purposes was the very calling of the nation for which it was "elected," and marks its true place in history. The call, based on God's choice, dated back to Abraham, the father of the people. I picture him a strong, calm-browed man, large

* Sir Edward Strachey, *Jewish History and Politics.*

in volume of being, of stately yet withal child-like simplicity, with wistful eyes that looked far into "unborn ages," walking before an invisible God — guided by an invisible Hand—a strange enigma to his neighbours. Around him are flitting shadows; away beyond are undisclosed realities, and a city which hath foundations, toward which he travels. God had chosen this man, and made him trustee of unmeasureable grace for mankind, promising that in him and his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed. The nation descending from him is God's chosen servant, chosen and formed for Himself by Divine processes which we can still trace—no mere unconscious and unconsenting instrument, but the intelligent witness for God, and steward of His grace for the whole world—"the religious teacher of humanity" —the Divinely-appointed torch-bearer of the nations in their march through the darkness

—a kind of *conscience* to the world. The work appointed was great and difficult, and their strength was small. But Jehovah is for and with them; therefore they need not fear. Jacob is only "worm Jacob;" the men of Israel are but a "handful:" yet shall they "thresh the mountains:" the weakest and obscurest of nations, being God's servant-nation, backed by invisible power, shall become the mightiest Divine force on earth. Between them and victory, indeed, may lie dreary tracks of suffering and sorrow: for this is God's way of fitting nations for the greatest destiny. They may find themselves "in the wilderness," afflicted and poor, seeking water and there is none, and their tongue is parched for thirst. But Jehovah will hear and not forsake them: He will open up streams on barren hills, and unseal fountains in the valleys; He will make the wilderness a pool, and the dry land water springs; the

wilderness He will clothe with verdure and foliage; that men may see and know and consider and understand that *His* hand has been at work—the hand that plants all beauty and bestows all precious things. The representations are highly figurative; but they point to a transformation no less wonderful than turning the Sahara into Paradise.

The student of history recognises a great work done for all generations by ancient Israel—a work whose greatness becomes larger the more we appreciate the spiritual and Divine elements of life. We survey with interest the fortunes of other nations—"the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome"—their social and political institutions, their wars, their art, their philosophy, their literature, their "religions that grew wild:" but we find powers of another kind developed in this small and obscure people to which no parallel exists elsewhere. Notwith-

standing all shortcoming and forgetfulness and disloyalty, they bore witness to the name of Jehovah, the one living and true God, the God of righteousness, longsuffering, goodness, and truth, the moral Governor of mankind; and they maintained their witness against the authority of the whole world. They gave expression to the conception of moral law, of sin, of grace, of Divine redemption. Not only was the lamp of truth kept alive, if at times dim and flickering, among themselves; but, as I read history, the spiritual ideas that struggled amid the darkness of ancient heathenism, the scattered rays of light that pierced the heavy and cheerless gloom, the strange, far-spread longings which justify that name, "*The Desire of all nations*," are largely due, under God, to the world-influence of this people. Their very sufferings were, in a sense, martyr-sufferings for our advantage.

In xlii. 1, Jehovah as it were leads in His

Servant, and sets Him in open view, summoning attention by His solemn "Behold!" The word is a Divinely-spoken *Ecce Homo*. The Servant is not left to His own resources; Jehovah upholds Him with the supports and supplies of His might. He has not taken service upon Himself uncalled: Jehovah has "chosen" and "delights in" Him, and endues Him with His Spirit. This is His equipment, as in chapter xi. 1-5. His mission is "to bring forth judgment* to the nations." I do not like to dilute that great word "judgment" into the feeble word "religion," but rather take it as parallel, indeed as equivalent, to "righteousness" in its broad and deep sense. God's very throne is "established" on this foundation. To bring forth righteousness to the world belonged to the covenant-calling of

* A judge's decision; here, God's decision; which always exhibits righteousness. From a root meaning to administer justice.

Israel. Herein the carnal nation failed. The very idea of righteousness had become distorted among them. The true Israel—here represented as a Person—fulfils the calling. In doing this He has the world against Him, and the world's law: unrighteousness, being assailed, shall resist and fight. The Servant shall not use the world's weapons and methods, nor retaliate in the world's spirit: "He shall not cry (= scream), nor cause His voice to be heard in the streets: a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." This is no "unbraced tameness," but the patient gentleness of love. The struggle may be long and sore, but "He shall not fail nor be discouraged" till His work is perfected. He shall "bring forth" righteousness, shall cause it to appear; He shall bring it forth unto "truth," giving not the mere name and semblance thereof, but the reality, in the deepest truth of the word. He shall

"set" or establish it, giving it root and permanency. He shall set it "in the earth," not in one corner only, but universally; and "the isles," representing all the far unknown, "shall wait" — longingly — "for His law." The Servant, then, has not gone forth on a forlorn hope.

Having thus introduced Him, Jehovah next addresses the Servant Himself. He speaks in His supremacy as Creator: "I have called Thee in righteousness, I will hold* Thine hand, I will keep Thee"—assurances that take away all misgiving and fear. "I have given Thee for a covenant of the people:" in Thy person shall the people find themselves in league with God, having a covenant-claim upon His omnipotence. And not only is He given

* "*Hold:*" will hold *with strength*—will hold fast—as an Alpine guide might do for one whom he is conducting. That firm grasp puts strength into fainting limbs.

for a covenant of the people, but also "for a light of the Gentiles"—the world-nations at large—"to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Then follows the Divine signature: "I AM THE LORD;" and in boldest strains the whole earth is summoned to rejoice and give Him praise.

In seemingly harsh discrepancy with all this is the view presented in xlii. 18-22. Jehovah gathers the nation before Him and says: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see." The nation whose very calling it is to open men's eyes and to publish God's word are themselves blind and deaf. Guiltily so. They have eyes, and see not; ears, and hear not. The natural organs are there, but being unused, are dying out—just as the arm withers by idleness. Thus the carnal nation fails. It was Jehovah's pleasure

to give them a law great and glorious; yet in vain, so far as right effect was concerned. They did not lay it to heart. Equally in vain was Divine correction and chastisement. As the natural issue of this moral stupidity, they are "a people robbed and spoiled; snared in holes, and hid in prison-houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore." Clearly the idea of Jehovah's servant is not exhibited in the nation at large: but is something narrower.

In xliii., Jehovah claims Israel for His own by creation, redemption, and calling; assures them of His faithful mercies by flood and fire; and promises to gather them into one from every quarter under heaven—from sun-rise to sun-down. For this end He pays a great ransom for them. Then, as His redeemed, once blind and deaf, but now with sight and hearing restored, they shall be

witnesses for His sole Godhead before all nations; they are His chosen servant by whom His purposes are accomplished. He has formed them for Himself, to shew forth His praise. Their very existence as a redeemed nation glorifies Him, and declares to all the world His sole Godhead—Redeemer, Saviour, blotting out transgression, and remembering sin no more for ever.

In xliv., the Lord's blessing in qualifying for service is again assured "to Jacob My servant, and Jesurun whom I have chosen." They had been, as it were, a plant in an arid waste, stunted and shrivelled: "I will pour water on him that is thirsty* and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses." So shall Israel flourish through heavenly grace.

* Or that which is thirsty.

At the same time Gentile converts shall declare their attachment to Jehovah: "One shall say, *I am the LORD'S*, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the LORD,* and surname himself by the name of Israel."

This is the fruit of grace: "Remember these things, O Jacob, for thou art My servant; I have formed thee, thou art My servant; O Israel, thou art not forgotten of Me; I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto Me, for I have redeemed thee." Heaven and earth, mountain and forest, shall witness and rejoice in what God is about to accomplish by Cyrus, His anointed.†

* Shall set this mark on his hand, *For Jehovah.*

† Cyrus belonged to a branch of the royal house of Persia. He himself attributes his success in capturing Babylon to the god Merodach.—*Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments.*

In the group of chapters xlv.-xlviii., the work of Cyrus is set forth, and its consequences for Israel and the world. Jehovah has raised him up "for Jacob My servant's sake and for Israel Mine elect." He is Jehovah's agent for fulfilling His mighty purpose concerning Israel, and for spreading the knowledge of His name to remotest lands. This series of chapters comes to a close with a summons addressed prophetically to the returning exiles, bidding them tell forth even to the end of the earth how "the Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob."

From this point, as we enter upon the second great division of the prophecy, the personal and individual marks, partly noticeable as early as xlii., become both numerous and distinct in speaking of the Servant, till we reach liii., after which the name occurs in the singular no more. Chapter xlix. places us within hearing while the Servant speaks to the

isles and far-off nations. In speaking, He assumes the name of *Israel:* He is Israel's Redeemer, and yet is in some mysterious sense Israel too. The prophet, as it were, hears Him speak. What He says of Himself is parallel to what is said about Him in xlii. 1-7. He has been called from His very birth. His mouth has been made "a sharp sword." He is a "polished shaft" in Jehovah's hand, "an arrow hid in His quiver," ready for use when the moment comes. Jehovah has said to Him, "Thou art My Servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified." To outward view —and to Himself—it seems that till now He has laboured in vain, and spent His strength for nought and in vain; but this is not the end—He is sure that His judgment is with the Lord, and His work with His God, who has said, "It is a light thing that Thou shouldest be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of

Israel; I will give Thee for a light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation to the ends of the earth."

As in xlix., so also in l., the Servant speaks and declares His consciousness of His great calling. The carnal nation, Israel after the flesh, has broken down in obedience; the Servant is steadfast. The Lord has given Him "the tongue" of the learned, inasmuch as He had first a disciple's "ear." To prophets God spoke in dreams and visions of the night; to His Servant He comes every morning, in the dewy freshness of "nature's sweet hour of prime," and speaks in His ear, telling Him what message to bear, giving Him a "word in season" for the weary.* The

* The weary one. Not merely "the multitudes," but the individual soul,—as the old mystic thought he heard the voice of the Consoler saying, "Thomas Woolman, I have a word *for thee*." So men often think that the expositor of Scripture knows their secrets.

declaring of the message brings Him insult and suffering; but He does not flinch; He cannot be a traitor to God. On the contrary, He gives His back to the smiters; He hides not His face from shame and spitting; He sets His face as a flint against all the outrage and abuse showered upon Him. From chapter li., the collective name *Israel* is no more given to the Servant.

From these passages it may be seen of what sort the work appointed to the servant is. It is predominantly moral and spiritual in its nature, involving the setting up of God's will as the supreme authority in human hearts, and world-wide in its extent, reaching to "the end of the earth." In its far-off issue it is the bringing in of new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness (chapter lxv.).

In the accomplishing of this work, there is a noteworthy absence of what we call physical force, such as has played so large a part in

the world's history. Not to speak of conquest and empire-extension, even in ordinary government there has always been the sword at hand. The rulers of men have felt—and still feel—that they cannot dispense with it. And yet in civil society we are dimly conscious—if not distinctly aware—of powers that accomplish what the sword never could. We see self-sacrificing love and patience prevailing where the sword could only slay. Iron and gunpowder do not rule the world. All history shows this. Truth and grace are victorious where force could have done nothing, or would itself have been shivered and broken. The power wielded by Jehovah's servant is of this invisible and loftiest order. Whatever reserve there may be of the "terrors of the Lord," the servant comes in grace;—his power that of righteousness, of truth, of self-sacrificing, patient love.

Who is this Servant? The question is not,

Whom did the prophet himself think of? The prophets had to inquire and search into the meaning of what they were moved to utter, and might err like other men; but, Whom does the prophecy intend? Sometimes we think of Israel as a nation. Sometimes of the godly in the nation—the Israel within Israel, to whom God is good and only good. Sometimes we think of the penitent and godly remnant who returned from exile under the edict of Cyrus, a remnant in which the vitality of Israel lay—like the "eight persons" saved by the ark, who became the seed of the new world. Other passages make us think of one person in whom the idea of Israel as God's servant is perfectly expressed. In the fifty-third chapter, the singular marks are both more striking and more numerous. Certainly the first impression is that the servant is some single Person, and I know no reason to set it aside. To speak of a nation as a unity is easy

—as we might call Spain the servant of the Pope; but it is another thing to speak of a nation having a soul, which is made a trespass offering—cut off from the land of the living —making its grave with the wicked—justifying many by bearing their iniquities. Certainly such things could not be said of the nation of Israel as a whole, nor (without the utmost violence) of any collective body in the nation. All failed, in conformity to God's will. The language seems to me to point to, and require, some single person. I was present when the late "Sydney Yendys" was introduced to Kossuth. He saluted the patriot with the words, "I take a gallant nation by the hand." Every bystander felt the appropriateness of the salutation. The one man, Kossuth, stood as representative of the whole Hungarian people. Now have we not in this prophecy the One Person in whom the idea of Israel as Jehovah's servant is

perfectly exhibited? Just as the nation was at one time "in the loins of Abraham," and sprang from his single person, so it culminates in One* who accomplishes the Divine purpose and perfectly expresses the Divine idea, taking up and fulfilling Israel's vocation. This, which is the oldest, seems the most natural view to take. Every theory which explains the term in chapter liii. as a collective, and fails to see a person, individual and unique, is beset with insuperable difficulties, and must abandon historical standing-ground. Who, then, is he—this *One*, in whom the great lines of the prophecy are harmonized—so humble, yet so exalted—oppressed and afflicted, yet gloriously triumphant—put to death in ignominy, yet living, and seeing of the travail of His soul—despised and rejected,

* And branches out again into innumerable "servants," who are identified with Him and carry forward His work.

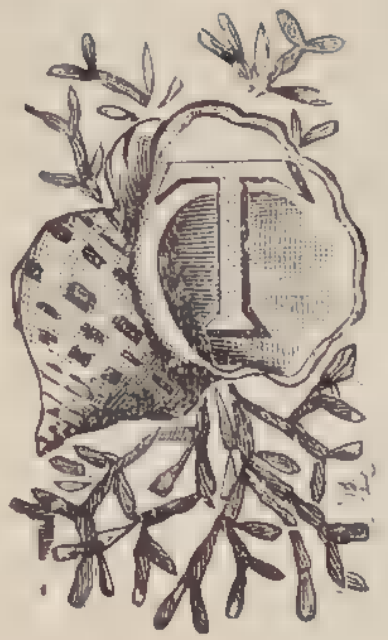
yet justifying many, because He bears their iniquities? Have we the photograph, coloured by enthusiastic love, of some one known to the prophet and his contemporaries, but whose name is clean forgotten? Is this "an elegy or lament for some departed saint or martyr, some true worshipper of Jehovah, who had been hunted to death for his faithfulness?" Have we here a purely ideal figure—"the Genius of Israel"—the creation of a poet's brain, for whom no historic representative is to be sought? Have we a gathering up of the hopes and dreams of Israel—as the third Eclogue of Virgil was the voicing of vague yet powerful yearnings, very far-spread at the time? Or does the prophet foreshew the sufferings and glory of the Redeemer of Israel, who is also God's Salvation to the end of the earth? He who admits *God* into his creed cannot reject this last identification *à priori*—cannot even think

it improbable. When we have carefully scanned the portrait in its broad outline, in its minute, subtle, and almost unperceived touches, and in its inner spirit, we shall be able to pronounce with assurance whether there is anything corresponding to it in New Testament history, yea or nay.

CHAPTER III.

What the Lord says concerning His Servant.

Behold, My Servant shall deal wisely,*
He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.
Like as many were astonied at Thee--
(So marred from a man's was His visage,
And His form from the sons of men);
So shall He startle many nations.
Before Him shall kings shut their mouths;
For that which had not been told them they shall see,
And that which they had not heard shall they consider.
—lii. 13-15.



HESE are the words of Jehovah, fore-announcing His Servant's humiliation and final glory. The fore-announcement is not simple prediction, but declaration of Divine purpose. The suc-

* *To make wise*, Gen. iii. 6.

cess which awaits Him in His work is complete, there is no failure at any point, but full accomplishment of Jehovah's pleasure. Faithful service is sometimes defeated; the difficulties prove insurmountable; the antagonistic forces are too mighty; the servant's strength or heart fails, and he gives up in despair. It is not so here. "My Servant shall deal wisely"—with understanding and practical wisdom—and by consequence "shall prosper." However it may be with prudence, wisdom is unselfish; love is its heart, and love wins the day. Faithful service sometimes goes unrewarded; the design is accomplished, but the servant is left in obscurity, unhonoured. Not so here: "My Servant shall be exalted and lifted up, and be very high." In history, for the most part, ideas triumph, while men are forgotten. A man thinks his thought, and utters it; it is lodged in other minds as seed; it germinates and

grows; in after ages, it brings forth fruit to the blessing of mankind; yet he who first thought it may be utterly forgotten, or at the best *Stat magni nominis umbra.* Not so with Jehovah's Servant. The victory is not that of His *idea*, but of *Himself personally*. *He* shall prosper; *He* shall be exalted.*

The exaltation is reached by a strange path—that of abasement and suffering. It is not the abasement of obscurity, as when one who was high-born sinks out of sight; it is humiliation and shame placed conspicuously in view, as in a pillory, or as in the centre of an arena, so that "many" are astonished at Him—dumb with astonishment—staggered at the sight—as when some ghastly scene of ruin is unexpectedly spread out before the

* Identical with the promise, Jer. xxiii. 5, "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth."

eye, or as "the land" is said to be astonished when some overwhelming calamity befalls it. An element almost of revulsion enters into the astonishment here. Men imagine that a great king sending a representative on an affair of state in some great crisis would send one of illustrious and commanding name: we look for due proportion between the messenger and the sender. But here, instead of one princely in position, aspect, and bearing, challenging homage by his very look, around whom enthusiasm naturally gathers, lo, One whose visage is more marred than any man, and His form more than the sons of men—so marred as to seem unhuman. "Marred" is the prophetic word, and indicates a change from once-existing fairness or beauty.* Just

* For illustration of the term "marred," compare the portraits of Milton in early life, shewing the grace of his personal appearance, with the ruined face of later life as depicted by Faithorne.

as "oft converse with heavenly habitants" on the part of any one will soon

> "Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
> The unpolluted temple of the mind,
> And turn it by degrees to the soul's essence
> Till all be made immortal,"

so, to be brought into contact and acquaintanceship with human guilt and misery—to serve God amid men and women whom sin has dragged down and debased—will tell upon the outward appearance, and write "strange defeatures" therein, giving the look of premature old age. This is what has taken place with Jehovah's Servant: grief has done its work and set its mark upon Him. Some few indeed see it to be the mark of glory; but for the most part lookers on regard Him with repugnance.

In proportion to this astonishment shall be the surprise with which "many nations" —not *individuals* merely—shall afterwards

look on Him, surprise mingled with reverential awe. The clause in our English version, "*He shall sprinkle many nations*," taking the figure in the original strictly, tells us that He shall startle* them. While the expression

* "Startle" is given in the margin of the Revised Version. "So shall many nations exult in Him," is the reading of Gesenius. The force of the Hebrew word is seen in such a passage as this: "Thou shalt take of the blood and sprinkle it upon Aaron, and upon his garments" (Ex. xxix. 21). In sprinkling, the blood is made to leap, so to speak, by the sudden movement of the hand. There are more than twenty parallel instances in the Old Testament. One of them is in this same prophecy, lxiii. 3, "Their blood *shall be sprinkled upon* My garments," in which the leaping forth of the blood on the raiment of the Conqueror is vividly represented. Here the word seems to be used in precisely the same way. "Many nations" are "made to leap" by Him. The figure is doubtless a bold one. It marks the sudden start of surprise and amazement, as when a disguise drops off, and the seeming peasant is seen to wear the star of a prince. According to the Authorized Version, He who was Himself an abhorrence and an outcast, like

marks the start of sudden recognition of the unexpected, yet (as I understand) it brings before us not a single and simple emotion, but the whole complex emotion excited by the unlooked-for revelation, and predomin-

a leper, shall sprinkle and thereby cleanse many nations, in virtue of His priesthood. While the thought is true in its application to Jesus Christ, I do not find it in this passage. The translation which makes it mean that, is simply inadmissible on grammatical grounds. The Chaldee Paraphrast, keeping nearer to the original figure, suggests the word "scatter." "As the house of Israel earnestly hoped for the Messiah many days, so shall He scatter many nations." Just as drops of water are scattered in sprinkling, so shall the coming Messiah scatter Israel's enemies. The paraphrase shews how powerfully the hope of an earthly conqueror had laid hold on the Jewish imagination. Another view, deriving the word from a different root, translates, "So shall He *aghast* many nations"—strike with amazement. [Since this note was in type, I find Professor A. B. Davidson assert: "It is simply treason against the Hebrew language to render "sprinkle" [here.] The interpreter who will so translate will 'do anything.'"]

antly gladness, bounding of heart, as when "mourning" is turned into "dancing." Representing earth's loftiest power, kings shall own Him their superior, and shall be dumb before Him, in reverent homage, seeing and hearing what was unprecedented in history or their own experience. Earth's monarchs, the proudest and loftiest throned, shall shut their mouths and be silent before the Man with the marred countenance.

CHAPTER IV.

What the Penitents Tell.

§ 1. Who hath Believed?

"*Who hath believed our report?*
"*And the arm of the Lord, to whom hath it been revealed?*"

—liii. 1.

S one might stand on a cliff, overlooking a wide plain, dusky with evening shadows, and might hear voices in advance without discerning any figure, so the prophet stands, and from out the far and dim future there comes to his ear a voice laden with sorrow—the speaker or speakers

unseen. The distance forward from the prophet's age, whether a lifetime or centuries, is not declared, nor is any scale supplied by which we may measure.

The paragraph, verses 1-10, is the penitent soliloquy—the *cardiphonia*, it has been called—of those who at first mistook and rejected the Servant, but afterwards received Him. In some respects it resembles those sudden bursts of exultation that lie scattered in the Apocalypse—"Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth; let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him." Even now, in the ages of waiting, we feel the gladness of that final Alleluia, though we cannot yet utter it. In like manner this penitential soliloquy was prepared before the time came round for its use, and lay waiting in the roll of prophecy till there should be hearts and lips for its utterance.

The term "our report" does not necessarily

mean (as an English ear might take it) the report of which we were the *bringers*, but, strictly, the report of which we were the *hearers*—"that which we heard." Comp. 1 Sam. ii. 24; Jer. xlix. 14. Those who speak here are persons to whom good tidings came, and who are surprised and saddened to find so few fellow-believers. The sense would be brought out by paraphrasing, *How few have believed the tidings that came to our ears!* At the same time it must be remembered that the hearer, by a spiritual necessity, becomes in turn a teller. He must carry forward the fiery cross.

The "report," according to the strict meaning of the word, is not something written down for the eye, and afterwards read; but something spoken by living men to living men—passing from lip to ear, answering to the "joyful sound."

Besides the "report," there was also a

revealing of Jehovah's arm—as it is said in lii. 10, "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations." The arm is the symbol of power—not bare, naked power, such as is seen in the dash of the sea billows, or the movement of machinery, but power under the control of reason, feeling, will—power with a heart behind it. An "arm of flesh" represents the power of man, feeble, soon tired out, easily broken, perishing in the day when his breath goeth forth, and he returneth to his earth. "The arm of Jehovah" represents the Divine power in its covenant love and faithfulness. It is revealed in the Person of the Servant. He *is* the power of God—the very arm of His might.

Strange that Jehovah's arm should be revealed, and no man see it! Even the stars up in the silent night will call men out to gaze upon them when their shining is clearer than common: surely it might have been expected

that the unbared arm of the Lord would enforce attention. Yet this blindness is in keeping with what we know of the human heart otherwise. Thus, a man will pass through a moon-lit churchyard where dead men lie with whom he used to shake hands, and chat, and laugh, or who were dear and familiar friends of his; the mounds are hieroglyphs in which his own mortality is written out; yet he goes his way and reads nothing. A man will stand beneath Orion and the Pleiades, with mystery and silence all around, yet see no token anywhere of God. Even so here; when the Lord's arm is made bare, it is unbared among the blind, as the angel with drawn sword was invisible to Balaam, or as all the disclosures of modern science may leave men of keenest intellect unconscious of the Divine.

A report must be credited in order to produce its right effect; uncredited, it is mere

idle breath. An arm must be seen ere men will "trust upon" it. One might write down the utterest lie ever forged, enclose the writing in an envelope, and put it into my hands; or he might write down the grandest truth ever announced to man, and place it in my hands in like manner; neither will the lie do me any harm nor the truth any good, till I acquaint myself with it and believe it. By no mere arbitrary determination, but by the fundamental laws of our being, it is "to every one that believeth" that the Gospel proves itself "the power of God unto salvation." There is sometimes indeed an indolent assent yielded to truth, just to escape trouble, or pain of conscience—an assent miscalled "faith," which is of no avail whatever for any practical purpose. The truth, though assented to, has none of its proper power, but lies, as Coleridge puts it, "bedridden in the dormitory of the soul." The truth is *admitted*, but not

believed. You speak to one of some solemn and weighty matter with the whole earnestness of your soul, and he answers, *Yes, it is quite true*; yet you see clearly that he does not believe you; he wishes merely to get rid of your importunity; and you would rather have a firmly spoken *No*, than that dead, passionless *Yes*, which means simply that your artillery has been playing on ramparts of soft clay. In point of fact, a man's faith is the deepest and mightiest thing in him.

The place which the Bible assigns to faith is justified by experience in every region. Thus, in the case of the child, his life is absolutely built on faith. It would be impossible to educate him were faith excluded; not only in moral and spiritual directions, but in any. Were he to demand proof at every step, you could not give it; in a thousand cases you could only reply, *You must in the meantime take this on trust; you will see the*

evidence by and by. Passing from the child to the man, it is the same; if reason has enlarged her domain, so correspondingly has faith; and without faith, the life of the man is as impossible as the life of the child. If we regard the mere secular aspects of life, the business of the world could not be carried on four and twenty hours without faith. No community could be governed and kept in order by soldiers and policemen alone; society would fall to pieces. Supremely so in the domain of religion. Suppose a country divided into parishes, with church and spire in every one of them, "Divine service" proceeding every Lord's Day, the Bible in all men's hands, Christian phrases on all men's lips, Christian profession universal: if there were no *faith* in all this, it would simply mean the moral death of the people.

In view of such considerations, mark that the report and the unbaring of Jehovah's arm

have been met with general "unbelief"—the word covering the whole ground from simple indifference to decisive rejection. Few have believed the report; few have seen the unbared arm; Jehovah's Servant wins no general recognition. Lowly waiters there might be here and there who knew and welcomed Him; but they were few in comparison, and the great majority stood on the other side. God's good news was proclaimed to the deaf; His arm was unbared among the blind.

This, then, is the plaint of sorrowful disappointment, sent upward to the skies, by those who have heard and believed the glad tidings, who have seen the glory of Divine power; but who find themselves surrounded by the indifference that chills, or the unbelief that breaks the heart: "*Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?*" It comes from a voice

quivering with emotion. There is nothing of more sorrowful kind in human speech. *They* can understand it who have loved their fellow-men with true heart, and yearned and prayed over them—all in vain. Here is not the pain of mortified ambition or wounded vanity—not the self-torment of a disappointed man who feels himself slighted, but pain akin to what is heard in that outcry of God's heart, "*How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel?*" akin to that of Paul when he said, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart . . . for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;" or like that saddest and last lamentation over Jerusalem, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!"

Here is a deep lesson for all who would help their fellow-men, and who are pained by the indifference and aversion with which love

is met. Do not shrink from the pain. Do not let personal chagrin or wounded pride get mingled with it. Do not take opiates for it. Accept it. Let it penetrate the very soul; to be capable of feeling it belongs to the help-giver's fitness for his work. Strange as it may seem, it will keep the heart from withering, and the fountain of human love from drying up. It will purge away selfishness. If his message is slighted or contemned, if a thousand scornful fingers are pointed at him, the true man of God will be only the more calmly and sorrowfully resolute. The very pain puts nerve and courage into him.

§ 2. The Servant Despised and Rejected of Men.

"*For He grew up before Him as a tender plant,*
And as a root out of a dry ground;
He had no form nor comeliness,
And when we saw Him there was no beauty that we should desire Him.

"*He was despised and rejected of men;*
A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;
And we hid as it were our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."
—liii. 2, 3.

These verses taken together state the fact and disclose the cause of the rejection of Jehovah's Servant when He came. He wanted the qualities which the carnal nation admired, and He undertook a work in which they felt no interest—the establishing of righteousness in the earth.

In the Authorized English Version there is in these two verses—as throughout the chapter—an interchanging of past, present, and future tenses that is somewhat confusing to a reader. We shall preserve the true meaning if we use pasts and futures only. And we shall find that we have not a number of disjointed particulars thrown together without order under the influence of emotion, but

that one thing comes after another in natural sequence.

We shall also, I think (after the manner of Hebrew poetry), discover voice and response, as of the two Emmaus friends, when they "reasoned together"—verse standing over against verse, each pair of verses giving expression to a full thought—onward to verse 10, which (like verse 1), is the united utterance of the whole band of penitents.

Jehovah's Servant does not burst upon the world all at once, in sudden splendour of daring or achievement, dazzling all eyes and captivating all hearts: He conforms to God's slow, silent law of growth. This law holds in every province of God's empire. Great lives are built up under this law:—a babe on mother's lap, opening its fringed eyelids to look forth wonderingly on an unknown world, a child learning to prattle and play, a boy at school, a young man with bloom on his

cheek and "splendid purpose" in his eye, and so onward throughout successive stages; light and truth, joy and sorrow, repose and conflict, hope and fear, perplexity and assurance, all entering into the wondrous life-process. Even so did Jehovah's Servant "grow," by a natural human growth.

According to the manifest suggestion of the verses, He grew up in obscurity and lowliness. Not as a prince royal, on whom the hopes and eyes of a nation are fixed, and all whose movements are chronicled in Court Gazette or Circular. Here is One living a lowly life in lowly environments. He grows up "*before Him*," before the face of Jehovah Himself.* We picture some sequestered nook, remote from the din and clamour of the crowd; and we think of a childhood spent amid the quiet, sweet, balmy influences

* Ewald suggests '*before us*,' *i.e.*, we *saw* the lowliness.

of a human home, with nature around, the child cast into the fellowship of lowly people and simple scenes, and growing up under the eye of God Himself.

Men expected a "plant of renown," fairer and statelier than all the trees in the garden of God, with boughs lifted cedar-like in majesty; instead, there is a suckling, a sprout from the root of a tree that had been cut down, with nothing fair or magnificent about it. It owes nothing to the soil in which it grows. The ground is dry, an arid waste without moisture; the plant is a tender one; and in that unpropitious soil, whence no sweet juices can be drawn, it grows up stunted, dwarfed, unattractive. That is the figure. It is missed in the lines,—

"Fair as a beauteous, tender flower
Amid the desert grows,
So, slighted by a rebel race,
The Heavenly Saviour rose."

Not *that;* not a beauteous, tender flower, growing fair in some desert spot, lending desolation a charm; but a tender sapling growing in unfriendly soil, far away from "the scent of waters," sickly, dwarfed, without beauty. The idea is more nearly caught in the other lines,—

> "Like a tender plant that's growing
> Where no waters, kindly flowing,
> No kind rains, refresh the ground,
> Drooping, dying, ye shall view Him,
> See no charm to draw you to Him,
> There no beauty shall be found."

The same thought is presented in another way when it is said that He had no form nor comeliness, and no beauty to make Him desired. This does not necessarily mean unattractiveness of personal appearance, any more than the line, "Thou art fairer than the children of men," points to physical grace. There may have been such unattrac-

tiveness, for some of the noblest souls—Socrates, for example, or Paul, whom Renan calls "an ugly little Jew"—have been meanly housed; but, quite as consistently with the language, there may have been in His aspect power, grace, majesty, blended with sorrow and meekness. The heart of the thing is, that men *did not see* the beauty that was there; He did not answer to their ideal; He wanted the qualities which they admired; His greatness was not shaped to their thoughts. Having misread the prophecies, having imagined another Deliverer than God had promised, being blind to the heavenly, while their souls lay open to the carnal and earthly, they found nothing worth gazing upon in Jehovah's Servant when He came. They would have welcomed a plumed and mail-clad warrior, riding forth to battle against the oppressor, would have shouted before him, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most

mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty!" They have no admiration and no welcome for One who comes, meek and lowly, to make His soul an offering for sin, and to be God's salvation to the end of the earth. It was not *sin* that troubled them: how should a Saviour from sin delight them? What was there in a Bringer-in of righteousness to inspire such hearts?

A rejected Deliverer, flung back with contemptuous refusal—that is the spectacle brought into view. There is a greatness that towers up in massive, rugged strength even when men oppose—greatness that stands firm and unmoved while the sea-waves dash against it—greatness such as is seen in some of the world's "men of renown;" that may be hated and envied, but is not great enough to let itself be despised. But here is greatness on which men look down. "He is despised:" men feel themselves above Him,

and hold disdainfully aloof. "He is rejected of men:" they throw Him back, and repulse Him; cast Him out of their society, and place Him under their ban. This is the greatest greatness, that can love on and do good in the very teeth of hate and scorn.

Treated thus, He stood forth as "a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." This was His very characteristic, the token we know Him by. We have all seen grief and sorrow in our time; no one can live long without doing so, God knows; but it is not one sorrow or two that makes one "a man of sorrows," nor one meeting or two with grief that makes him the acquaintance of it. *How* the Servant endured—with what fortitude and patience, with what faith in God and acquiescence in His will, is not here brought into view; but simply the fact that sorrows came thick and heavy upon Him, like wind-driven rain beating on an unsheltered head

—and that grief was present with Him, as His close companion, through life. A noble nature, repelled in all its efforts to bless, is pained unspeakably more by that repulse than by the crowding in of merely personal ills, or by all the slings and arrows of adversity; and *His* sorrow came thus—because His brethren rejected the help He brought, repelled the Helper, and abode in their evil state.

And for this Deliverer, sorrow laden and intimate with grief, there was as it were the hiding of the face.* Men turned away from Jehovah's Servant, instead of meeting Him with a joyful gleam in their eyes, responding

* It has been proposed to translate this: "He was like one hiding His face from us"—as one does whom some blow has stricken, and who is ashamed to front the world. I cannot but think this rendering unwarranted. More could be said for the interpretation, "There was as it were a hiding of *God's* face from Him."

to His grace and help. It was sad enough to receive no recognition and no welcome in the great mission on which God had sent Him—to find none to share His thought and sympathize with Him in His work of righteousness; sadder, to have sorrow and grief laid upon Him; and sadder still, to meet antipathy. "We hid as it were our faces from Him"—as one looks the other way to avoid the eye of a person whom he dislikes, or as one shrinks from an object of loathing. We have invented an evil word which just describes the evil thing—*we cut Him.*

Once more, and as the finishing touch in this description: "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." This was said before; the repetition emphasizes it. Coming after the mention of His sorrows and the refusal of human sympathy to Him, it has all the effect of newness. When they saw His sorrows

they might at least have let Him alone. But they would not; it is repeated, "He was despised, and we esteemed Him not," or, as Luther puts it, "*We priced Him at nothing.*"

§ 3. Wounded for Our Transgressions.

"*Surely He did bear our griefs*
And carry our sorrows;
Yet we—we did esteem Him
Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

"*But He—He was wounded for our transgressions,*
He was bruised for our iniquities,
The chastisement of our peace was upon Him,
And with His stripes we are healed."

—liii. 4, 5.

"He" in these verses, standing for the Man of sorrows, is emphatic; our griefs and sorrows *He* bore. Of the two words, that which is translated "grief" refers more naturally to what is corporeal (Deut. vii. 15-26,

Is. i. 5); "sorrow" to what is mental (Ps. xxxii. 10, xxxviii. 17, lxix. 29).

In determining the suggestion of the words we are entitled to scan history as a whole onward from the time when the earth was corrupt before God and was filled with violence, and it repented Him that He had made man upon the earth. It is a roll wherein is written lamentation and mourning and woe. The catalogue of evils opened out is absolutely appalling.

Here are some of the items. Hunger and want, the result of indolence, vice, misgovernment, rapacity, war. Disease and all the countless forms of physical evil. Cruel power, trampling down the weak and helpless with iron heel, and splashing out blood. Unrighteousness, even in the judgment-seat. Treachery among sworn friends and brothers. Disappointment, discontent, utter weariness of soul. Lust, poisoning the springs of life,

deadening conscience, and turning men into brute beasts.* Pleasure luring men on in the ways of death. If refined, its refinement does not make it less deadly. Just as some of the most fearful poisons of Italy and Spain were made up in scents and perfumes, so there are evils more subtle, dangerous, damnable than the coarse and revolting, just because of their aroma. There are homes whence love has vanished, with hate and murder lurking in the shadow, holding the poison-cup or clutching the knife. Wingèd souls, that might have risen to celestial heights and rejoiced in the fellowship of the eternal God,

* There is no exaggeration in Matthew Arnold's reference to the Roman Empire at its period of greatest outward brilliancy :—

"On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell ;
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell."

ensnared and damned by the fleeting enjoyment of an hour. Remorse, with her whip of scorpions for the guilty conscience. Shame, for which there is no hiding-place but the grave. Is this the world over which the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Is this the world that God once looked upon, and behold, it was very good? Lo, humanity lies in blood, mangled and torn. Ask now, "*Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there?*" and with groans and tears the answer is sent back: *No; they have given Me opiates, but have not healed Me; they have bandaged, but have not stanched My bleeding wounds.* Think of Jehovah's Servant in a world where such things are found!

The general idea presented is that of one bearing as a burden the fruits and consequences of what others have done. *He* took up, say the penitents, *He* lifted and removed

our griefs and sorrows. Some men, self-centred and selfish-hearted, can see misery existing around them, and have no feeling stirred—unless it be a feeling of annoyance because their taxes are heightened, their "amenities" rudely interfered with, their comfort invaded, and so many unpleasant calls made upon them. Others, kindly and sensitive, are pained by the sight of misery, and will give money* and sentiment, but shrink from personal contact. As far as possible, they keep out of the way, turning down the pleasant avenue under the shade of the lindens and acacias, to avoid having their feelings harrowed—and using their scented handkerchief if Lazarus should chance to be

* Just as many would give half-a-guinea to a subscription in aid of the wounded man whom the good Samaritan lighted upon by the wayside, but would not soil their fingers and shock their nerves by binding up his red-lipped wounds.

near and the wind should blow from his quarter. One in a thousand bears the burden of others—feels the woes of others—as if they were his own. Personally they are none of his; but through brotherly love he *makes* them his, and takes them upon himself. This is what Jehovah's Servant did. He identified Himself with the people; He did not merely bring help, but *felt the pressure* of their woes, taking them upon Himself as if they were His own; yea, He made them His own by His magnanimous, self-sacrificing interposal. This is one of love's painful, blessed mysteries, this uptaking and bearing the burden of others—as God does.

But though the ills He bore were ours, say the penitents, yet we for our part deemed them the infliction of an angry God, due to His own demerit. In our shallow self-complacency and blindness we said, Lo, God is against Him: "we did esteem Him

stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted"—*stricken*, as the leper is stricken, *smitten of God* with the hand of retribution, *afflicted*, humiliated, and brought down by this penal suffering on His own account. He must have incurred God's displeasure, we thought, to draw such suffering down upon Himself. God is not capricious or unjust. He punishes in exact proportion to the measure of guilt, hence the demerit of any one can be calculated from his suffering.*

Yet the true state of the case was this: "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed."

In this pregnant statement "He" stands in the foreground, with emphasis laid upon it; *He*, where our place was. The words

* As the barbarous people judged Paul a murderer when the viper fastened on his hand.

are plain enough as words, and need stir no controversy. *He* suffered for *us:* the Hebrew language furnishes no plainer or distincter terms in which to declare the substitutionary character of His sufferings. He was "wounded," pierced, transfixed, as when one receives a sword-thrust in battle. He was "bruised," crushed, as by successive blows, or as when a heavy wheel passes over the flesh, or as when a heart is broken. He received "chastisement," and that not merely by rebuke, but by strokes, leaving "stripes," the livid mark of blow or scourge. The reason why is added. He was wounded, not for offence of His own, but "for our transgressions." He was bruised, not because *He* had strayed from the path of righteousness, and the great avenging wheels of retribution overtook and crushed Him, but "for our iniquities." He received chastisement, not because *He* needed it, or had drawn it down

by His misconduct, but that *we* might enter into "peace." And the stripes were not meant for the cure of dangerous tendencies in *Him*—were not the discipline of Fatherly love, that He might become partaker of God's holiness, but were for "healing *to us*."

The general thought standing out broadly and solidly is, that the Servant suffered on account of the sin of others, and that through His suffering they obtain peace and health.

1. It is easy enough to see how the innocent may have to encounter suffering brought on by the fault or folly of others. A child sets a great stone in motion at a hill-top, and it goes bounding and crashing down, and breaks everything in its career. A boy kindles the dry grass and heath of a moor, and the conflagration spreads and seizes upon the neighbouring wood and cottages, blackening and desolating for half a mile. A labourer cuts an opening in a sea-

dyke, and the tide, rushing in, makes a clear breach through, and drowns the country beyond for miles and miles. A miner carries an open lamp into the goafs of a coal-pit, and causes an explosion in which a hundred innocent lives perish. A father sins, and his sin comes down in misery and shame on the head of his children. A community lives in filth and vice, and the visitor who comes in among them to do them good, breathing poisoned air, is seized with fever and dies. It might be said that the Servant of Jehovah suffered in like manner, through the curse which others generated, and for which they are responsible. True as this might be, however, it fails to satisfy the language of the prophecy. We understand all this very easily. We cannot help concluding, however, that there is something deeper in the case.

2. We think of this other thing: Through His holy sympathy the Servant is pained by

man's sin and wretchedness. Coming in among men with pure nature, sensitive to evil as the eye is to touch, coming in among their falsehoods and passions and treasons and blasphemies and swift runnings to evil, how could He be but grieved even to anguish by what met Him at every turn? We know how it is in other cases. A young man who has been brought up amid the sweet and holy influences of a Christian home, gives himself over to some course of evil living, casts off restraint, spurns rebuke, throws the reins on the neck of his lusts, and rides full gallop to hell; who can conceive the grief of that young man's friends? *His* sin wounds, bruises, agonizes *them* in a manner and a measure which none can understand but those who have experienced something like it. So Jehovah's Servant must have been lacerated in heart by the sin and woe of His brethren. Loving righteousness, He has a

clear view of the hatefulness and baseness of sin, and unfalteringly says *Amen* to the judgment of God upon it. Just in proportion to the purity and righteousness of His nature must have been the anguish begotten in His bosom. Even this, however, does not satisfy the words of the prophecy.

3. Think of another thing: The Servant of Jehovah, in order to give effectual help, voluntarily shares the condition of others, and suffers along with them. In an unsuffering world, it were impossible to make full disclosure of what is in love's heart—as the virtues of balm cannot be known where there is no pain, or as the heroism of woman is not seen till, in a Grace Darling, it braves the danger of rock and tempest to save the lives of strangers, or till, in a Florence Nightingale, it fronts

> "The trenches cold and damp,
> The starved and frozen camp,

The wounded from the battle-plain
In dreary hospitals of pain,
The cheerless corridors
The cold and stony floors."

Suppose that a nation is sinking into moral corruption. Selfishness is accepted as the law of life. All things are tending to national ruin. A patriot appears who devotes himself with pure intent to the welfare of his people. He is misunderstood, he loses friends, he becomes involved in a struggle that issues in a cruel and shameful death, for the sake of truth and right. It is no mystery to be told that he is wounded and bruised for his nation.

Or suppose that in some great city, thousands are huddled together in squalor and misery. Penetrating the lanes and slums, and making your way up dark staircases, or down into cellars, where beings with human faces herd together, you find every corner

reeking with abomination. Air and light scarcely find entrance. You come upon sufferers writhing on straw, through nights that weep and wail, with no hope of joy in the morning,—

"Longing, and yet afraid to die."

On every hand are tokens of all that is fleshly and brutal. The children are growing up familiar with vice, and breathe an atmosphere charged with moral poison. There are women from whose faces all womanhood—mothers from whose faces all motherhood—has faded out. There are social abysses yawning right and left, in which honesty, purity, and truth seem impossibilities. The devil of sensuality and dirt has it all his own way. One who pities and loves the people goes in among them, hoping to aid in lifting them up. Very speedily he discovers that gifts of money are not enough—are not even in the line of truest help. It is not enough to lean down

from a serene and painless altitude; he finds he must *come* down and identify himself in brotherhood with those whom he would help, and must prove himself the lover and friend of souls. He learns that,—

"Not even Christ Himself
Can save man else than as He holds man's soul."

But how to win and hold souls? Only by the magic of love that shrinks from no hardness, no disgust, no sacrifice. It is not enough, he finds, to visit the district, to hold meetings, to give good advice, to minister to the sick and sorrowful; he must come closer still, and be not only their benefactor but their brother. "I will bear it with you," he says. So he takes a house and lives among them, sharing their privations, that he may lead them to a better life. He who would work deliverance in the earth can do so only through sacrifice. It is a law of the kingdom of heaven. With his eye on the page of

history, Canon Liddon writes, "All the good that is done among men is proportioned only and exactly to the amount of sacrifice that is employed to produce it." This witness is true. And not only is sacrifice the Divinely traced way *for us* in doing good; it is God's own way. God's power culminates in sacrifice. Not by the mere *fiat* of omnipotence spoken from the "battlements of heaven" does He accomplish His gracious purposes. In revealing Himself as Saviour, He reveals Himself as Sufferer, taking upon Himself what men call pain and loss. "*These are His portion; from eternity He chose them.*"

The old pagan idea of the gods was that of beings untouched by the cares and sorrows of men, living ever joyful, ever at ease in their cloudland heaven, to which the awful wail of human misery cannot rise. The idea is expressed in lines which tell how they haunt the "lucid interspace" of world and world, where

there never creeps a cloud, nor breathes a wind, nor falls the snow—

> "Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
> Their sacred, everlasting calm!"*

The Christian idea of "the Blessed God," on the contrary, is that of One whose "soul is grieved" for the misery of this sinning world, who takes the burden of man's world upon Himself, and who finds His joy in self-sacrificing, saving love. This is the great law which conditions all true help-giving. Jehovah's Servant conforms to it, and shares the pain which He came to heal.

4. Yet this still falls short of what we are told in the prophecy, "Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities." Does not this say that in a real sense He suffered vicariously? not merely *with*, but *for* others? By no exegesis is it possible to escape this conclusion. And there is nothing

* Tennyson's *Lucretius*.

in the conclusion that need surprise us. It is in keeping with what we know otherwise. You would not abolish vicariousness by getting it eliminated from the Bible. No one can be unfamiliar with instances of one taking upon himself the penalty of another's recklessness or folly, even within the range of what we call "natural law." A child, for example, playing in a room beside his mother, moves a bar which he has been forbidden to touch, and overturns a vessel full of scalding water. The mother sees the danger to her child, and in an instant throws herself between him and the deadly peril, voluntarily taking upon herself her child's penalty, and saving his life at the cost of cruel suffering for herself. Cases less or more resembling this are not uncommon within the range of ordinary observation. To leave out vicarious suffering were to erase the brightest pages from the story of the past,—of all golden

deeds,—of men who have died for their country,—of martyrs who have gone to stake or scaffold for the truth's sake, and helped to pay the purchase-price of our religious light and freedom ; and would leave history but a poor record of ignoble selfishness or mean ambition, a record unutterably sad, little better than the record of a herd of wolves or a Newgate Calender. Seldom, indeed, has there been love absolutely pure from the taint of selfish feeling ; and yet it has been strong enough to take upon itself much suffering in the stead of others ; and has taught us at least to acknowledge that it is a sweeter thing to do good than to enjoy selfish ease and pleasure, a nobler thing to suffer for others than to win the world's renown.

Among the Jews, the idea of vicarious suffering was far from strange ; their sacrificial system distinctly expressed it. Sin (said the sacrificial system) is an offence unspeakably

odious to God, which He cannot look upon, but must punish. Death is the due punishment of sin. But God has no pleasure in the sinner's death. He is full of mercy, and has Himself opened up a channel, through sacrifice, whereby sin may be expiated, and pardon granted in righteousness. The sacrifices under the law had no intrinsic efficacy to put away sin; but only *symbolized* substitution—the substitution of Jehovah's righteous Servant in place of the guilty. Men indeed may exclaim against the propriety of one suffering for others, and may insist that every man be wounded for his own transgressions and bruised for his own iniquities. But there is no moral reason, so far as I can see, to forbid love from voluntarily stepping in and suffering for others, to save them from badness and misery. Now in this prophecy, here is One suffering for sins which He never committed —enduring what others deserved—standing

in the transgressor's place, as if Himself the transgressor.

As respects those for whom the Servant suffered, the result is salutary. It is twofold; embracing on the one hand the removal of guilt, and on the other the cure of sinful tendencies, the "disease of nature," and "corruption of the blood." The sufferings are not only vicarious but redemptive.

Within the human bosom, the world over, are self-accusings and poignant regrets because of ill that has been done, and dread of what *may be*, when God shall reckon with us. The case may not be clear to the man himself; but the sense of guilt is there, ineradicable:—*It is done; I did it; I cannot undo it; no tears or repentings can change the fact; and I dread the future; for I hear a Voice which proclaims with mysterious, awful, sovereign authority, "Woe unto the wicked; it shall be ill with him."* And so the conscience

of the sinner is in a condition of pain, varying from mere uneasiness to darkest and intensest remorse. A fire smoulders within that may blaze up any hour into fierce misery. Under such conditions, there can be no true peace with God, no true love of Him, no true joy in Him, no true walking before Him; but revolt and aversion whenever His will thwarts and crosses ours. Oh, if only that guilty past were blotted out and made as if it had never been! Oh, if only I could go forward into that unknown future a pardoned man! But the question of blotting out that guilty past is not so simple as at first it may seem. When my child offends me, it is no "satisfaction" to me to punish him, measuring out the pain to the last burning drop; I forgive at once as soon as he confesses his fault and promises amendment: why should not God (men ask) do the same? But I look more closely into the case and—not to speak of the difficulty

of leading him to repentance—I see that I do not forgive my child off-hand and at once; in forgiving I aim at manifesting righteousness before his understanding and conscience, winning his heart, and taking some moral security that he will not persist in the offence. If I fail in this, I confess that my forgiving is imperfect, and I cannot expect from it right moral consequences; nay, if in forgiving I should fail to manifest righteousness, I perplex my child's conscience, I bewilder him, and do him moral hurt. Any treatment which violates or ignores the rights of conscience must result in evil. The forgiving of sins is a question of righteousness as truly as of mercy. If God cannot forgive in righteousness, then He cannot forgive at all. If He were to forgive simply because He is compassionate, or because (being sovereign) He so wills it, or out of mere good nature, He would remove the very ground on which my

conscience plants itself in all its moral operations. It behoves that the glory of His character and the rectitude of His government should suffer no eclipse, but, on the contrary, be demonstrated. But now light is thrown on the case—though still deep mystery remains—when it is said, "The chastisement of our peace was *upon Him*." Through His suffering for others, they obtain "*peace*," in the sense of reconcilement to God.

The other result is *healing*: "By His stripes we are healed." It is not simply that His stripes save us from being stricken—as when one bears scourging in the room of another; but somehow the stripes inflicted on Him bring healing to us.

By some the case has been viewed so exclusively from what is called "the forensic" point, that they have practically represented the whole transaction as a "legal fiction," standing parallel to devices adopted among

men which may be characterized in that way. In the region of Divine dealings with men, however, no "fiction" of any sort exists. By no "make-believe," but most really, if at all, the Servant of Jehovah stood between "us" and the consequences we had drawn down upon ourselves; and in doing so, not only averted them from us, but brought us healing. This is the thing stated.

Vast benefit, moral and spiritual, is often derived from suffering. However we may shrink from it, it is one of God's chiefest means whereby He creates in His children a heroic and princely spirit, and makes them "partakers of His holiness." To be exempt from suffering is to want one of the marks of sonship. God's crucible is kept glowing for those He loves; and these are no unmeaning words, "Made perfect through suffering." Ofttimes the man who was living an easy, self-indulgent life is led through some sore

anguish, and he emerges from it with a deepened nature, and a new ideal of life. Even the noblest man, under God's discipline of pain, becomes nobler: he not only comes out of the burning fiery furnace without the smell of fire having passed upon him, but with the calmness and light of other worlds on his brow. So, too, the "bruising" and humbling of a nation has checked dangerous tendencies, and has brought out latent heroism, power of endurance, brotherly love, mental and moral resources which otherwise might never have been known; and the nation has been exalted by its very fall.

But here is something beyond all this. Here is healing for the wrong-doer through the suffering of another in his behalf. The process is not utterly strange under God's government. In averting some great danger from us, or securing some great benefit, a benefactor is bruised and mangled. Formerly

we had thought ill of him; had despised and rejected him; had hid, as it were, our faces from him. He magnanimously fulfils his loving purpose, and in doing so is "bruised" and "stricken." We see the suffering, while we reap the blessing. What healing *for us* in his bruise! It helps to kindle new thoughts and feelings in our breast, to lift us up into another region, to beget faith in a power mightier than selfishness—because we are brought under the spell of generous love. He loved us, we say, and better thoughts arise in our mind as we say it—he loved us and suffered for us, and every drop of blood in our body blesses him. Is there not "saving health" in this?

An episode from two lowly lives may help to clear the thought. Two girls tended machine-frames in a large factory, side by side. The one disliked the other very unreasonably, and on various occasions had

"spited" her and done her wrong. One morning the dress of the wrong-doer was caught in the machinery, and a few more revolutions of the wheels would have been fatal. The other, seeing the danger, and the need for instant action, thrust in her arm among revolving wheels, threw the machinery out of gear, and saved her companion's life; but at the expense of mangling and lacerating her own arm. Was there no "healing" for the wrong-doer in the torn and bleeding arm of the benefactor? Must not the very sight have helped to bring her to a better mind? I do not wonder that she kissed her saviour and wept. Nor was it transient, I should suppose.

Such cases as this are not parallel to that of the Servant, but only steps of a ladder by which we may climb to a nearer view of it. Yet I would reverently venture an "*Even so.*" Whatever other elements may be discerned

as present, we may say of the Servant's sufferings that "healing virtue" flows from them to our narrow and selfish nature when the heavenly generosity is seen and believed in. And so, through the grace of the pure and blessed Spirit of God, we learn that song of gratitude, "Bless the Lord, O my soul . . . who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases."

§ 4. The Sin-Bearer.

"*All we, like sheep, did go astray;*
We turned every one to his own way;
And the Lord laid on Him
The iniquity of us all.

"*He was oppressed, and He was afflicted,*
And He opened not His mouth.
As a lamb is led to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before her shearers is dumb;
So He opened not His mouth."

—liii. 6, 7.

As the sea furnishes a thousand illustrations

of life or truth to "the inhabiters of the isles," so the shepherd and his flock do to Hebrew prophets and psalmists. Here is an instance. "All we," say the penitents, who still speak, "all we, like sheep, did go astray." The picture is that of a scattered flock, all wandering from the pasture-land and the protection and care of the shepherd, but each one "in his own way." It is not, as in the parable, the wandering of one sheep out of a hundred, ninety and nine being left, but the scattering of the whole flock. This is the thing to note.

Under this figure is represented "our iniquity," the word implying both the sinful act and its guilt. Sheep are not to blame for wandering; they know no better; but in men, with reason, conscience, and heavenly light, wandering means sin. This was the condition of those whom the Servant came to bless:—all were wandering from God and righteousness and safety, each one straying in

a way of his own. The sinful alienation was universal; the modes of its manifestation as various as men and their tendencies.

These "iniquities," these sinful wanderings, say the penitents, "the Lord laid *on Him*." We must not change the figure at this point, to think of what took place when a sacrificial victim was slain. We are not to see a worshipper pressing his hand on the head of a victim, or the high priest confessing the sin of Israel over the head of the scape-goat on the great day of atonement: we must keep to the figure if we would apprehend the thought.

The action implied in the word translated "laid" appears in such passages as the following: "The servants of the king would not put forth their hand to *fall upon* the priests of the Lord." "Benaiah *fell upon* Adonijah that he died." "The elders of Israel *met* (came upon) Moses and Aaron."

The idea which lies in the word, in its simple form, is that of *coming upon* one, whether quietly or forcibly. The intent of the coming is not declared in the word itself, but must be learned from the connection. It may be a friendly intent, as when the angels of God *met* Jacob at Mahanaim, coming suddenly upon him; it may be hostile, as when an armed band *fell upon* a village,—

"By shriek and candle-light,"

to sack and destroy it; or there may be no intent at all, as when Jacob in his flight from Esau "*lighted upon*" a certain place, coming upon it, as the phrase goes, by accident. The English word "laid"* (caused to come upon) is thus a fair rendering of the original.

When we all had wandered, like strayed

* The verb in its simplest form means *to come to or upon;* in Hiphil, *to cause to come upon;* which is the idea intended in our Authorized Version, "The Lord *laid* on Him the iniquity of us all."

sheep, the Lord "caused to come upon" His righteous Servant the iniquity of us all. What does this mean?

Two boys come home from school together; one of them throws a stone and breaks a window; the blame is laid on the innocent boy, who is punished in consequence, while the wrong-doer escapes. A man who had committed a crime was screened by his brother, who personated him without detection by the magistrate, and saved him by paying the penalty. It is very clear that the Lord could not attribute iniquity to His Servant thus; that would be to blame the wrong person. Nor is there any conceivable sense in which my sinful actions can become the actions of another, and cease to be mine. Actions, whether good or bad, are intransferable. Another may indeed consent with me in wrong; and then his consent is his sin. Or he may carelessly allow me to do what he was

stationed to prevent—as a watchman may amuse himself, or go to sleep, while the house he was set to guard is robbed; and then he is to blame for the robbery that is effected. Or he may meet the penalty deserved by me, and may undertake to deal, as far as he can, with the results of my misdeeds, and neutralize them. But if I did wrong, it must remain true for ever that I did it—I, and not some one else. Anything that contradicts this is inconceivable.

But yet—the wanderings of the sheep came upon the Shepherd; the carelessness of children "comes upon" their mother, in toil and weariness and heart-break; the woes of the slave "came upon" Clarkson and Wilberforce; the hopeless misery of the heathen world "came upon" the heart of William Carey; the ills of "those poor people of the Soudan" came as a crushing burden upon the spirit of General Gordon, so that he wrote, "*I could*

give my life for them." In a way that has no parallel, "the iniquity of us all" came upon Jehovah's righteous Servant.

To say all this, however, is not to say enough. "Our iniquity" did not simply come upon Him, but was made to come upon Him by Jehovah. The previous verses have shewn man's guilty hand in the case; now we must mark Jehovah's action: *He* "laid our iniquity" upon the Servant, placing the awful burden on *His* shoulders. This was at once His deepest humiliation and His most glorious distinction.

But if there was Divine appointment, there was also His own acceptance, shewn in His voluntary and unshrinking endurance. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep is dumb before her shearers, so He opened not His mouth."

There has been a good deal of discussion as to the translation and meaning of this verse in the original. I do not see any serious objection to take the first verb impersonally,* and to render, "It was exacted"—exaction was made—"and *He* became answerable." To the exaction, say the penitents, *we* should have answered; but *He* came forward and bowed to the suffering. The Revisers translate: "He was oppressed, yet *He* humbled Himself." The word *He* is emphatic in the original. The humbling includes the despising and rejecting, the wounding, bruising and chastising already named, and some things to be named by and by. The double action must not be lost sight of. Just as the Assyrian was the rod of God's anger for the chastisement of Israel, and at the same time took evil pleasure in smiting them, so, while

* As in verse 5, where we read, "By His stripes *it is healed* to us," *i.e.*, we are healed.

the Lord laid our iniquities upon His Servant, men too were active, and laid the last ounce they could upon His shoulders. To this burden He bowed as one sufficient for its weight.

His sufferings He bore silently—obedient (as will be seen by and by) even unto death. He made no resistance. When *we* suffer, how hard we find it to be still! The flames of resentment—how they leap up in our bosom, and flush our cheek with angry red! What impatience there often is, what murmuring, what outcry, what publishing of our sorrow! Or if there is silence, it is at times akin to stoicism, the proud determination not to let men see how we feel. But the spirit of the Servant is loftier and grander unutterably. In sublime and magnanimous silence He endures to the uttermost, sustained by His mighty purpose and by the conviction, *Jehovah wills it.* I see the temper of His mind in this

silence; I see His strength; I see His rest in God; and I look down into the unfathomed mystery of Love. He came to do what only Love was equal to—that is abundantly clear—and He shrank from no suffering; raised not His arm, opened not His mouth, in His own defence, wearied not, fainted not, but was dumb with silence.

It is this magnanimous, suffering love that wins and holds hearts. This is in accord with a Divine principle. All helpers of man, by some deep necessity, must come within the circle of man's pain; the more glorious the help they bring the nearer the centre of that circle must they stand—ONE in the very centre who wears the sharp regalia of thorns, the Saviour with the bruised heart. How could He lay hold on men—how could He show them what God is and does—how could He conquer carnal, selfish hearts, but by the magnanimity of suffering love? It is not the

mere deliverance, however blissful, that does it. You sit all heedless and unconscious of danger within the spring of a tiger. Its eyes glare and limbs quiver, ready for the fatal bound. One who sees your danger shoots the wild beast dead with his rifle. You owe your life to him, and cannot but pay him life-long gratitude as your saviour. But suppose he had had no rifle, but had sprung in between you and death with no weapon in his hand except a hastily-snatched club, and had saved your life thus—coming out of the conflict torn and bleeding—how different your feelings! How your life would have been his! It is not the mere deliverance that binds you to him, but the love that wrought it freely through daring and suffering. Ah, and if you had before been his enemy!

§ 5. The Mystery of His Death.

"*From prison and from judgment He was taken,*
As to His generation, who considered
That He was cut off from the land of the living,
[*That*] *for the transgression of My people the stroke was upon Him?*

And He made His grave with the wicked,*
And with the rich in His death;
Because He had done no violence,
Neither was any deceit in His mouth."—liii. 8, 9.

These verses, taken together, bring into view the last particulars of the humiliation of the Servant. From among the many renderings proposed, I accept the above, though much might be said for the rendering, "By oppression and judgment"—*i.e.*, by an oppressive judgment—"He was taken away."

It lies in the heart of the verses that the

* Literally, "*He gave*," or, taking the verb impersonally, "one gave," or "they gave," *i.e.*, appointed; as in the German "*man gab.*"

Servant suffers death, and that by violence. He is "stricken," and by a stroke He is "cut off" not merely "from His people," or "from the congregation," but "from the land of the living." And the stroke is upon Him "for the transgression of My people"—as the sin-offering on the great day of atonement was "for the people," and "because of their transgressions." So that it is not merely the *prophet's*, but the *Saviour's* cross that the Servant bears.

It is one of the safeguards of justice, obviously demanded, that a man charged with crime shall not be brought to a hurried trial. Lynch law, which is but another name for blind, vindictive passion, is a crime against natural right, and a return to savagery. Custody is necessary, in order to prevent escape; but it is also necessary in order that due time may be allowed the accused man to arrange his defence or to prepare for the

inevitable. In our own country, while one shall not lie in prison for years before being put on trial, neither shall he be brought to trial hurriedly. Only extreme necessity could justify hurry, and there ought to be no room for it in the ordinary administration of law. From this point of view, especially when life is at stake, the imprisonment or custody that precedes trial is part of the justice which every man has a right to claim from his fellow-men. His answer to the charge laid against him may be ready and conclusive; but none the less is hurried dealing unjust.

A still greater wrong is it to take him also from judgment, not allowing him a trial before a just tribunal in the face of the world.

Both these wrongs are done in the case of Jehovah's Servant. He is taken, snatched, forcibly torn from prison and from judgment —the ordinary formalities, designed as safe-guards against wrong, are set aside or pre-

served only in name; He has but the mockery of a trial, or no trial at all; His death is accomplished with hurry and injustice. Who of that generation considered what was being transacted before their eyes?* Who reflected that He was suffering "for the transgression of My people?" Yet this is the key to the mystery: His sufferings have their procuring cause in the sin of others. He seemed to be getting His own deserts when He was getting ours. Sometimes a stroke falls where it was not intended; here, as we shall find by and by, was no inadvertence; the stroke alighted where

* The word "taken" in the pual denotes forcible removal without declaring the purpose; "prison" is restraint or confinement; "judgment" is judicial action or process of judging; "generation" is neither course of life, nor destiny, nor descent, nor posterity; but either men of the time bound together by birth-tie, or men of one's order, who are with Him in spirit; more naturally the former.

Jehovah intended it to alight—on One who "had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." The Revised Version has in the margin: "He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of *My people*, to *whom the stroke was due*."

The story of His humiliation proceeds: "And He gave His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death." All along He appears as One who surrenders Himself willingly to suffering in the behalf of others. True, *we* despised and rejected Him; true, "*the Lord*" laid on Him the iniquity of us all; yet, throughout, it is not merely apparent, but is made prominent, that He suffered with His own free consent. We conclude that the supreme surrender was also voluntary—His surrender to an unjust death. It is not so much that His life was *taken* as that it was *given*. By this giving, "His grave was appointed with the wicked," which was

the last indignity possible. It is not said that He was actually buried among criminals, though a criminal's grave may have been ready for Him—but simply that He surrendered Himself to such a doom.

Yet notwithstanding this surrender He was "with the rich in His death," or while death held Him in its embrace.* There is some peculiarity in the case—some enigma—to be solved by history. In all countries, I suppose,

* It is not necessarily "*a* rich man," though the word is in the singular. It is literally "deaths," as the word for "*life*" is plural, *e.g.*, in Gen. ii. 7; Psalm cxxxiii. 3, &c. Delitzsch understands it to be a death so painful as to resemble several deaths. There is no reason that I can see for saying that the word translated *rich* means *godless*, or for inferring, from the previous mention of the *wicked*, that it means a rich man who had unjustly gained or misused his wealth. Looking to the symmetry, we might have expected such a word as *felon;* but fact rules in the case, and poetic symmetry must give way. The word "rich" simply declares worldly condition, without touching on character.

it has been the rule that persons put to death as criminals have had ignominious sepulture. Even after death shame has followed them, though after ages have ofttimes reversed the award, and built monuments to them. The Servant gave Himself to the shame; and yet respect (if not something higher) comes in its stead. Contrary to previous likelihood, He is buried in honour. "Died like a criminal, buried like a prince of the earth."

"Because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth." A strange *Because*. I do not think we are to connect it exclusively with the burial in a rich man's grave, and to say that He was buried thus because of His innocence. Rather we must connect it with all that has been said immediately before. From a sense of the difficulty of doing so, attempts have been made—I think needlessly and unsuccessfully—to turn *because* into *although*.

The word in the Hebrew answers nearly to our word *upon*, as when one thing is based upon some other thing. Understanding the word in this sense, we gather that the Servant was subjected to the treatment which has been described on account of His very faultlessness.*

There are two ways in which law may be broken or wrong done. We call them force

* The well-known passage from Plato (*Republic*), so often brought into connection with this chapter, is thus translated by Jowett :—"At his side let us place the just man in his nobleness and simplicity, *being*, as Æschylus says, and not *seeming*. There must be no seeming, for if he seem to be just, he will be honoured and rewarded, and then we shall not know whether he is just for the sake of justice or for the sake of honours and rewards ; therefore let him be clothed in justice only, and have no other covering : and he must be imagined in a state of life very different from that of the last. Let him be the best of men, and be esteemed to be the worst ; then let us see whether his virtue is proof against infamy and its consequences. And let

and fraud, or violence and deceit. Speaking broadly, offences against the law may be grouped under one or other of these heads. Now, to say the least, it is here asserted that the Servant was without fault as respects *men*. He had done them no wrong. The language may even look deeper, and point to faultlessness *before God;* may be equivalent to the expression, "without sin." Certainly, had any fault been detected in Him, those who

him continue thus to the hour of death; being just, let him seem to be unjust. . . . Let me put [the words that follow] into the mouth of the eulogists of injustice. They will tell you that in the case described the just man will be scourged, racked, bound—will have his eyes burned out; and at last, after suffering every kind of evil, will be impaled," *i.e.*, will be crucified. How like this passage is to Isaiah, and yet how far from parallel, every thoughtful reader will see. Equally far is the idea of Cicero, that if ideal goodness, for which the heart had longed, were to appear on earth, all men would fall down in worship. In history it is not universal worship, but rejection.

cut Him off from the land of the living would have pointed it out and made the most of it. But, say the penitents, there was none. The language indeed is of a very general character, and does not go into detail: yet evidently it points to something unique. The best of men have their failings: here is One who had none.

Now His very faultlessness, the righteousness and purity of His life, called into activity the hatred of evil men, and it was again as it had been in the beginning, when Cain slew his brother, "*because* his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." In that far-back story we discover the whole secret: the bad hate the righteous for their righteousness, even as they hate the righteous God.

And what if *Because* is also the right word, when the case is viewed in its Godward aspect? The context warrants us to view it in these aspects. In His death He is viewed as a

sacrificial offering. But it was the deep law of sacrifice, resting on a moral basis, or at least with a moral significance, that the blemished could not be accepted for God's altar. The physical immaculateness points to the necessity of moral perfectness in Him who suffers "for the transgression of My people." And the Servant suffered as He did, for the special purposes in view, and so as to accomplish them, "*because* He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth."

§ 6. The Glory that Follows.

Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He did put Him to grief;
*When His soul shall make an offering for sin**
He shall see a seed, He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.
—liii. 10.

* Or, "*When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.*" In either case, the Servant gives His life as an offering for the sin of others, and takes on Himself the penalty which their guilt had incurred.

These words, spoken by the penitents with united voice, gather up all that has been said hitherto and bring it to a climax. The thought of the Servant's faultlessness is vividly present to their minds as they speak. We must not explain away the words so as to make them say that "the Lord was pleased with His bruised One." Nor must we be content to say that the Lord does what He permits to be done. We must hold firmly that His purpose was carried out in the bruising of His Servant. Here is not merely the mystery of suffering innocence; but of innocence suffering at the hand of righteousness and perfect love. Had He deserved "bruising" as punishment, or needed it for the discipline of His own soul, we could have understood the matter; but it has just been expressly affirmed, as it has all along been silently implied, that He was personally faultless. Yet are we sure that Jehovah acted

righteously as well as sovereignly in what He did. This is the mystery which again and again meets us in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah, as well as throughout New Testament doctrine.*

Not only did the Lord bruise Him, but it was the "good pleasure of His will" to do so. He who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked was pleased to put His righteous Servant to grief—not of course because the death-agony was a pleasure to look upon, but as means to the fulfilment of a great purpose. Even a noble-minded man finds pleasure in contemplating heroic and self-sacrificing love in others, to accomplish glorious ends. We

* Matthew Henry, identifying the Servant with the Messiah, notes as to the "bruising:"—"The Scripture nowhere says that Christ in His sufferings underwent the wrath of God." So far from this, He was, throughout, even in His deepest sufferings, the object of the Father's infinite complacency.

look back, for example, on our martyrs, who suffered cruel death for the Gospel's sake; we forget the physical torture they endured; or rather it ceases to be a horror in our eyes, and becomes a glory; we read of their sufferings with uplifted and joyful hearts, thanking God who gave such grace to men. And even so, we cannot help thinking, the Lord, whose pity is like unto a father's pity, had pleasure in the self-sacrifice of His Servant; yea, had pleasure in the very appointment which issued in the self-sacrifice. And if we add to this —as exhibited in what follows—the results which the sufferings achieved, in their nature, blissfulness, magnitude, and perpetuity, we shall understand how it comes to be said, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him: He did put Him to grief."

These results now begin to be brought into view: "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see a seed, He shall

prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand."

He is worthy to be admired and loved independently of all results, and prior to their evolvement. One leaps into a boiling sea to save a child's life—do you experience no instant thrill of heart as he takes the plunge? Do you withhold your admiration till the child is brought safe to land? And if two lives should be lost instead of one, do you not feel that for you history is the richer and Divine influence the larger by one golden deed—a deed as fine in quality as that of David's three mighty men who broke through the host of the Philistines and drew water from the well of Bethlehem that was by the gate? A patriot struggles and suffers and dies for his fatherland—do you measure his magnanimity by his success? Nay, is not our highest admiration often called forth when a heroic man's purposes suffer defeat? Even

so, the true glory of Jehovah's Servant is seen anterior to results altogether.

The results date from, indeed are the fruit of, His soul making "an offering for sin." This expression is the gathering into a focus of all that has already been said respecting His sufferings. These sufferings, reaching unto death, constituted a guilt-offering,—an expiatory sacrifice—a satisfaction to the law of God. Language could not more simply and unequivocally declare the significance of His death. In some offerings under the law we meet the idea of gratitude; in others, of self-consecration; in others, of propitiation and satisfaction; in others, of reconcilement and the re-knitting of broken fellowship. In assigning a meaning to the Levitical terms employed in this chapter, an important consideration must be borne in mind. While based on profound religious wants, and pointing to facts of Divine grace, the sacrifices

under the law had no intrinsic avail; they were but a kind of picture-writing; acts were done in the lower and ceremonial region to shadow forth what is done in the higher or spiritual. In this chapter, two of these sacrifices are specially referred to—the sin offering and the trespass offering. While they had much in common, and while there was "one law" for both, there was yet a distinction between them. The former looked to sinful state; the latter to actual transgressions, the fruit of the sinful state. In the former, the blood of the slain animal was sprinkled before the Lord; in the trespass offering, the direction was simply that the priest should sprinkle it round about upon the altar. The sin offering was carried without the camp and burned there; the trespass offering was burned upon the altar. The sin offering set forth propitiation; the trespass offering set forth satisfaction; it was brought by the

transgressor "to make amends for the harm that he hath done." It symbolized rights violated and compensation rendered—debt contracted and satisfaction made. In His suffering unto death the Servant blends in His own person both the sin and the trespass offering. To the Hebrew, this would differentiate his death from that of a martyr.

The results of His pouring out His soul unto death are briefly summed up in three lines. First, He "shall see a seed"—the new seed of Israel, wherein the new nation lives. The general thought is, that as Abraham was the founder of a mighty nation, numerous as the stars or the sand on the sea-shore, so shall Jehovah's Servant be. Not only shall His death be no hindrance to this; it shall be the means of effecting it. The corn of wheat, falling dead-ripe into the ground, shall bring forth much fruit. Not only so, but after being cut off out of the land

of the living, He shall "see" this seed; they shall somehow grow up under His eye.

The next line is, "He shall prolong His days." The phrase is found very often in the Old Testament. Thus Israel entering Canaan was charged to observe God's commandments, "that thy days may be prolonged." Of Wisdom it is said in the Book of Proverbs: "Length of days is in her right hand." There are many similar passages. There is some mysterious peculiarity in the case of the Servant. It is after being cut off out of the land of the living—after making His soul an offering for sin—after pouring out His soul unto death—after being in the grave—that this life of continuance is represented as coming in. How can this be? Is it as with Isaac, who was virtually a burnt offering, by his father's act and his own surrender, yet lived after his offering-up for a long life-time? Or is there to be a resuming

of His life after He has laid it down? Is the sixteenth Psalm to find its fulfilment in Him: "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol, neither wilt Thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption; Thou wilt shew me the path of life?" Is there anticipation here of what we read in the Book of Revelation: "I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore?" This, to say the least, seems natural.

Lastly, "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." Strictly speaking, pleasure is a feeling or emotion of the soul. Naturally, the term comes to be applied to what *causes* pleasure. In a perfect being, "pleasure" and "will" coincide. What the pleasure of the Lord is, we find indicated in various ways in the Old Testament. It is in the line of such a declaration of His name as was made to Moses (Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7): "The Lord God, merciful and gracious."

His pleasure corresponds to His nature. He does good "in His good pleasure" unto Zion, and builds up the walls of Jerusalem. It is His "pleasure" that His Servant should open the blind eyes, and bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. He "has no pleasure" in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live—that the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and that he return to the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon. "I the Lord exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for *in these I delight*, saith the Lord." Such words throw light on Jehovah's pleasure, in its nature and scope. The term as here used applies to the special work which the Lord gives His Servant to do, and in which He upholds Him. That work shall prosper in the Servant's

hand. Not merely shall He create an oasis here and there in this sin-blighted world, with green palm-trees and singing birds and welling waters; but the wilderness and the solitary places shall be glad for Him, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. He shall not fail nor be discouraged till He have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for His law. He shall found an *empire of souls;* that is the prospering of Jehovah's pleasure—the establishing of righteousness throughout the whole world; and ultimately the creating of "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

CHAPTER V.

The Lord's Final Word Concerning His Servant.

"From the travail of His soul
He shall see, He shall be satisfied;
By His knowledge shall the righteous One, My
Servant, justify many,
For their iniquities He shall bear.

"Therefore will I divide Him a portion in the many,
And He shall divide the spoil with the strong;
Because He poured out His soul unto death,
And He was numbered with the transgressors,
And He bare the sin of many,
And made intercession for the transgressors."

—liii. 11, 12.

THE chapter began (lii. 13-15) with the word of Jehovah, and now it closes in like manner, declaring in language of marvellous comprehensiveness, with a triumphant tone in it, the glory reserved for the righteous Servant. It is not

the glory of the dead, whose very memory is fair and bright, but a glory which follows death, and yet is of the living.

The point from which the Servant begins to look on the great issues is "the travail of His soul"—He begins to look forth upon them from His very agony; as Ridley and Latimer, going to the stake, saw England illumined by the candle which they lighted. This "travail of soul" includes all the toil, suffering, and sorrow through which He came; and has been outlined, if not unfolded, in the previous part of the prophecy. It culminated when He was cut off out of the land of the living, and His soul was made an offering for sin, accomplishing what the Levitical sacrifices only symbolized. No accumulation of mere bodily sufferings could satisfy these expressions. The "travail" is that of the *soul;* it has its seat within, and is such as might find voice in those words reported from

Gethsemane, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" or in those other words reported from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It is what the Greek litany calls "unknown agonies."

Often has love wept over seeming defeat, wept, yet not melted the hearts it would bless. But in this case love has not suffered in vain; its travail has borne fruit both for God and for man. Having gone forth weeping, love comes again rejoicing, laden with harvest sheaves. The fruit is not exhibited in detail, but must be learned from the general complexion and scope of the whole prophecy. The fruits do not merely date from the making of His soul an offering for sin, as the period when they begin to be evolved; His sacrifice is the very root from which they sprang.

These issues "He shall see." Good men have prayed and laboured and suffered and

gone down to the dusty grave without actually seeing much fruit; they have even thought their life-work lost. It was not really so; no work done for God ever is; but they did not "see" what came of it. Either the results were hidden from them, or—life being so short—were not fully evolved, till they themselves were dead and gone. Ages have run their course, and not till their very name was forgotten have the fruits come fully forth—just as the hands which planted the seeds that are now a mighty forest have, generations ago, been numbed by death and turned into dust. One soweth and another reapeth; and, as history shews, the reaping-time may come ages after the sowing time. But the Lord's Servant "shall see" what comes of His soul-travail. It is not that His "idea" continues to live after Him, nor that His personal influence continues to operate, which may be said of many great spirits of the past. Thus,

according to Scottish story, the heart of the Bruce, thrown into the midst of the enemy, turned the tide of battle from defeat to victory, when his hand and voice could direct the ranks of war no more. But somehow the issues of the Servant's soul-travail are evolved and advance to perfectness under His own eye, notwithstanding He had died and been buried.

He shall see "and shall be satisfied." The word points to the fulness of His reward. It marks not mere contentment, but joy in its perfectness of One who is made "most blessed for ever." The suffering is overpaid in boundless delight. With us, even in our utmost success, there is ever something awanting—a sense of incompleteness; even when the hand closes on the coveted prize, how often the disappointed heart exclaims, *Is that all?* But *His* mind shall be satisfied—nothing awanting—*His* desires shall be met—

for *Him* there shall be the overflow of ineffable felicity.

For the issues, as already described, are *of a nature* to give satisfaction to a soul like His, being wholly good, beneficent, and in the line of righteousness and truth. Men sometimes labour with the best intentions, but through ignorance or some taint of evil in the worker, they do not accomplish what they aim at—the result is different from what they anticipated. The issues of the Servant's work lie wholly in the line of the Divine will, and are wholly good.

They are moreover *of a measure* to satisfy Him, being proportioned to the grandeur of His conception, desires, and capacities. *Our* cup holds but little, and is soon filled, as it is soon emptied again; what must it take to satisfy *Him?* As none but Himself knew the "travail," so, in the fulfilment of Divine purpose, He shall have a joy all "His own,"

—ineffable, measureless, corresponding to the grasp and quality of His own nature, so that *He* shall say, *It is enough!*

Still farther, setting forth the Servant's reward, it is added, "By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant* justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities."

I do not think the "knowledge" meant is the knowledge that He imparts. The prophecy does not here set Him before us as a Teacher, but as one who gives Himself "an offering and a sacrifice to God." It is either the knowledge He possesses (Is. xi. 2), or the knowledge *of Himself;* probably the former, though there is nothing in the terms to shew decisively.

By His knowledge He shall "justify many." This is one of the great words of

* Note how the order of the original gives emphasis to the word *righteous*: "The righteous One, My Servant."

Scripture. It must not be emptied of its individuality, and made synonymous with the word "save." It can be fully understood only when the radical idea of "righteousness" is apprehended by us. From the very nature of the case, righteousness is the sovereign principle of Divine government, to be maintained in the face of all consequences. God can do nothing that is not in its very core a righteous thing, else He would ungod Himself; and there can be no exercise of compassion on His part in disregard of righteousness; nor can there be any modifying of righteousness, so as to render it less stringent. The whole problem of making men righteous, or justifying them, has to be wrought out under these conditions thus indicated.

Now the word "justify" is not a New Testament word alone, but belongs also to the Old Testament. "I will not justify the wicked." "In the Lord shall all the seed of

Israel be justified, and shall glory." No reader of the Epistle to the Romans can forget the use that Paul makes of the Old Testament in his unfolding of the doctrine of justification: "What saith the Scripture? And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness. . . . David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin."—(iv. 3, 6-8, R.V.) While, under the old covenant, the doctrine of justification was not unfolded and set in the sunlight, it was at least fore-announced; and here, I think, the word "*justify*" is to be taken in the full extent and depth of its meaning, as the glorious antithesis to the word "*condemn*."

The "many" who are justified had "iniqui-

ties;" they were sinners. The justifying act, therefore, could not be grounded on their innocence, which would have been a good ground had it existed. Sin is taken for granted all through. But Jehovah's righteous Servant justifies, because He "bears," "carries" their iniquities, as has been set forth so fully in verses 4-6, where we have virtually the Levitical formula for propitiation. The germ, to say the least of it, of the doctrine unfolded in the Epistle to the Romans can be discovered here: "Justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood." From such doctrine the heart that is self-righteous, hard, and proud may turn scornfully away—as Naaman did when told to dip seven times in Jordan; but to the man who knows himself to be a ruined and helpless sinner, and who has been made to sigh for reconcilement and

peace with God, the news of grace to the ill-deserving, manifested in righteousness, will be welcome beyond all thought, and mighty to produce newness of life.

Finally, the personal exaltation of the Servant is declared, in its profound connection with His suffering, in words which find a marvellous parallel in the New Testament. where we read of One who was in the form of God, taking upon Him the form of a Servant, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: "WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him the name which is above every name." Exactly parallel is the thought here, "Therefore will I divide Him a portion in the many, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, BECAUSE He poured out His soul unto death, and bare the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors."

The exaltation is accomplished by

Jehovah's own hand: I will do it. The figure employed belongs to Isaiah's age. The Lord assigns Him a portion in the many —the many whom He blesses and saves. They are the portion allotted to Him. They are His, in love and attachment, as His reward. On the other hand, *He* divides the spoil among the strong who followed Him as Leader, and did valiantly. The Despised and Rejected One appears now as a glorious and great-hearted Conqueror, who has found His joy in suffering for others, and who distributes the blessed fruits of His victory among His faithful followers.

The exaltation is founded on this: "He poured out—He emptied, His soul unto death"—not dragged reluctantly to the altar, but "*giving*" Himself—not merely risking life, but laying it down; "and He was numbered with transgressors," or law-breakers, counted and reckoned among them, though

personally innocent; "and He bare the sin of many"—*He*, and not *they;* as the victim bore the ceremonial guilt of the Israelite; "and He made intercession for the transgressors," coming between them and their curse, taking it upon Himself, and bringing mercy to *them*. "Every word stands here," says Delitzsch, "as if written beneath the cross on Golgotha," and the whole passage glows as with the golden colours of dawn.

CHAPTER VI.

Who is He?

ARE the great statements made in this chapter true of Israel as a nation? Are they true of any portion of the nation, say of the exiles who returned from Babylon? Are they true of any single person—king, or prophet, or martyr—known to Jewish history? Before we can say so, the statements must be laid on the rack, tortured, mutilated, and emptied of all that is vital and characteristic in their meaning.

Taking the prophecy as a whole, and

allowing the terms their legitimate value, an absolutely unique Figure stands out to the eye. It is no mere shadow on the wall, but has the rich colouring of life; it is no vague, featureless portrait, such as might be fitted to any one of a hundred names, but exhibits the most marked individuality, both in broad outline, inner spirit, and all the nicer and more delicate lines and contours that give character to it. If an actual historic person is represented, it ought to be easy to identify him.

Does not the portrait distinctly bear on it "*the marks of the Lord Jesus?*"*

It is now close on nineteen centuries since

* Says Kuenen (*Prophets and Prophecy in Israel*), "Every one who submits to the authority of the New Testament must take the side of those who contend for the Messianic interpretation." As he does not submit to this authority, he feels free to take a different side. But he is right in the assertion quoted.

He appeared. He belonged to the royal house of David, which had long ago sunk into obscurity. He was probably the heir to the throne. He was born in a stable and laid in a manger, in His ancestral Bethlehem. Shortly after, He is found in the "unfamous" town of Nazareth among the Galilean hills. There He grows up in seclusion and lowliness through the mysterious years of boyhood and youth till He is about thirty years of age, with only a single glimpse of Him during the whole period. He grew up before Jehovah.

Then He steps out suddenly from obscurity, and draws upon Himself the attention, while He excites the perplexity, of the nation. He came to a people eagerly looking for a Messiah; but instead of conforming to the prevailing expectation, which was that of an oppressed and subjugated people, for a Liberator from a hated yoke, He deliberately ignored that idea. He had nothing to say

about Rome, temporal freedom, conquest, earthly glory. He did not utter a word that could go into a battle-ode, or that could be blazoned on a war-flag. His first word is a call to repentance ; His promise, the kingdom of heaven. A few humble men—mostly fishermen—became His followers. They have not much insight into His character, to begin with ; but they love Him, and, by degrees, they come to see the glory of God shining in His face. In their company He goes about through the land. He teaches the people, in synagogue, in private house, on sea-shore, on mountain height, revealing the love and truth of the eternal Father. He proclaims the nearness of the kingdom of God. He touches the leper and makes him clean. He opens the eyes of the blind. He bids the lame man rise and walk. He heals all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. He takes little chil-

dren in His arms and blesses them. He speaks hope to the poor. His words fall on weary and forlorn hearts like summer dew on the thirsty grass. He has a strange attraction for the outcast and despised. The woman that was a sinner washes His feet with her tears and wipes them with the hairs of her head. He is gracious to the penitent. He makes no terms with sin. He rolls out woe after woe, like thunder-peals of doom, against the proud and insincere. He scourges the hucksters from God's temple. No mere outward reformation will satisfy Him; men must be born again. With all His meekness and lowliness, He speaks in an imperial tone: "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He makes the most astounding claims: He says that God sent Him; that the words He speaks and the works He does are not His own, but His Father's; that the Father has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because

He is the Son of man; that He had come into the world to give His life a ransom for many, and to save the world. To many, especially the ecclesiastics and politicians, He is an intolerable offence. His truth and grace condemned their hypocrisy and selfishness. He cut across their most cherished schemes. By some He is regarded with blind dislike; by others, with haughty disdain; by others, with pitiless hate. The nation at large does not receive Him; the leaders formally reject Him and scout His claims. If any man own Him for Messiah, he is to be excommunicated. Taunts like these are flung out against Him: "He is beside Himself;" "He has a devil, and is mad;" "He is a glutton and a wine-bibber;" "He is a friend of publicans and sinners." Thus is He "pilloried on infamy's high stage," and shot at with the vilest missiles.

In truth, He was not the Christ they

wanted. They looked for a blood-red meteor, lighting the sky with a fiery glare, and when, instead, there uprose the sweet star of Bethlehem, mild as a celestial eye, they turned away in disappointment and chagrin. He *had* glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father; but they had not eyes to see it.

Throughout His whole career He does not His own will, but the will of the Father who sent Him. He is God's Servant, delighting to do His will, till at the close He could say, "I have glorified Thee upon the earth, I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do;" and then put on His crown of thorns.

Throughout His career "He is despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." Suffering is one of the largest facts in our world; it is one of the largest facts in His life. Suffering came to Him from every side, from the world's cruelty,

from the faithlessness of friends, from the rejection of His nation. He stood, so to speak, in the very focus of attack; while the greatness of His nature broadened the target at which the poisoned arrows were shot. His sufferings, too, were of the most varied character. All the waves and billows—even the whole flood-tide of suffering that rolls over humanity—rolled over Him.

Not only is His life one of peculiar suffering, owing to the bitter hostility of men, but He bears the burden of others, making their woes His own, in virtue of His profound and loving sympathy. There burns in His breast that saddest and most blessed of passions—the love of man. When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, like a shepherdless flock. His heart responded to the awful monotone of human woe that rose on every side. There was no

kind of distress into which He did not enter; no grief from which He turned away. *Our* sorrow is often a selfish thing, because we ourselves are hurt, or a superficial thing, concerned only with the physical sensibilities. *His* was moral pain—the sorrow of holy love over blinded minds and hardened hearts and souls that turned away from the light. He saw *sin* with the eyes of God, and felt it with the anguish of God. The fierce passion-fires it has kindled, the slow, pining misery it has created, the unutterable woe it has wrought, the devastation of God's fairest and loveliest works, and the dark future which lies enfolded in it, all lay open before Him:—no wonder that He was "a Man of sorrows"—no wonder at the agony of Gethsemane.

At length He is cut off from the land of the living. His death is accomplished with haste and indecency. He was arrested under no legal order, Jewish or Roman. In His trial,

the established mode of procedure in capital cases was disregarded. Led by the violent and unscrupulous priest, Caiaphas, the judges had determined beforehand that He should die; and their procedure was simply the carrying out of a foregone conclusion. "He was taken from prison and from judgment."

Pronounced guilty of death *as a blasphemer*, He is next brought before Pilate and charged with *sedition*. Though found guiltless by Pilate, who tried hard to get Him off His hands, He is not set free. Mocked, reviled, buffeted, scourged, spit upon, He is dumb with silence, committing Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. It is "the cup which My Father giveth Me to drink," and He drinks it without a murmur. Throughout the whole procedure He is perfectly calm and self-possessed.

Yielding to the scarcely-veiled threats of the rulers and the howling of the mob, Pilate

delivered Him up to death, and by our nine o'clock in the morning He hung on a cross between two robbers—"numbered with transgressors." As He was being nailed to the cross, He prayed, "Father, forgive them"—making intercession for His murderers.

The death of the cross is one of the few kinds of death whose horror has not been exaggerated in the popular imagination. Not to speak of the ignominy, every moment is full of torture to the last—and the last comes with terrible slowness. The cross is now become the crown of all symbolism; but of old it was more hideous than the gallows-tree. If the scene on Calvary could be pourtrayed as it actually was, we could not look upon the revolting picture without the soul sickening within us. But while the agony of the cross was in process, we perceive tokens of other anguish into which no physical element enters, which we may call pre-eminently

"travail of soul"—indicated by that dread *De Profundis*, which went up "single, scholess:" "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*" More than

> "All human loneliness, and pain, and loss,
> Brake forth in that exceeding bitter cry."

Only He who was "in the bosom of the Father" could understand the mortal agony of the "forsakenness." It is an agony for which the pain, the awful fever, and the insufferable tortures of crucifixion fail to account. What could it mean? He was not afraid of God. Here is no remorse; no back-look over a stained and blackened past; no mutiny against an irresistible and hated will; no dread of "wrath to come." There are elements in the case absolutely inscrutable. His own words are the only key to the mystery: "My blood is shed for the remission of sins."

This mysterious utterance, which connects pardon in the distinctest way with Christ's death, implies that men as sinners lay under Divine condemnation. This condemnation is a tremendous fact. Unless it can be in some way removed or cancelled (as has already been said), there can be no true peace with God, no true love toward Him, no true obedience to His will. "The guilt of sin, so long as it remains, must separate the guilty soul from God. Nor could any repentance, prayers, works, or satisfaction of human devising ever remove the dreadful barrier."* Christ has undertaken to deal with sin viewed as that which brings condemnation. He took our curse upon Himself and bore it; Christ died for us, and "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The moral consequences follow: not

* Dr. Pye Smith *(Four Discourses)*.

only is there now no condemnation for them that are in Christ; but "if any man be in Christ, he is *a new creature;* old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." All this is opened out in the Apostolic writings. Paul, for example, in *Romans* exhibits the whole world standing guilty before God, and then sets forth the Divine method of dealing with guilt and extinguishing it through the cross—a method revealing the Divine love and righteousness with a distinctness, a splendour, and touchingness absolutely incomparable. Christ Jesus "is set forth a propitiation." Propitiation presupposes the ὀργὴ Θεοῦ, the wrath of God, which is not a mere passion that might cool down, but the eternal and irreconcilable hostility to evil of His nature in all its attributes. Christ does not simply *make* propitiation; He *is* the propitiation for our sin, and we are "saved from the wrath of God through Him" (Romans

v. 9, R.V.). He *is* the righteous ground of our pardon. As the propitiation for our sins, God "hath made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." What this being "*made sin for us*" involved, only He can tell. It is through this suffering of His that righteousness becomes ours, or, rather, that we are made the righteousness of God in Him.*

It is sometimes objected that God cannot pronounce a man just unless he is so really

* "I must sit down in hopeless scepticism, and abandon all reliance on evidence and reasoning if I refuse to admit it as the doctrine taught in Scripture, that the Saviour of mankind voluntarily yielded Himself a sacrifice of expiation, bearing the guilt and punishment of sin not His own; when prophets and apostles and His own supreme authority concur in bearing this testimony to His sufferings and the glory that should follow."—Dr. Pye Smith (*Four Discourses*).

and actually. This objection is good against the mechanical view which turns God's act into a mere legal fiction, and disconnects it from vital union with Christ. But true faith, the faith which justifies, really carries practical righteousness in its bosom; as the lily root implies the perfect flower. Deliverance from the bondage of evil propensity, and restoration to righteousness, in the broadest, profoundest, most vital sense of the word, secured and sustained by the indwelling of the pure and blessed Spirit, are the necessary fruits of this faith. This faith is the *yea* of the inner being to God. In a case where only the intellect is addressed, faith is the *yea* of the intellect only. But the testimony of God concerning His Son is greater than all other, higher in its substance, appealing to "all that is within us" —to the human spirit, in its entireness and unity; and true faith is the *yea* of the whole inner being to the witness of God, combining

the assent of the understanding and the consent of the heart, and carrying in it energy as well as trust. And through this faith, God wins and holds and rules and saves the man.

In Doré's picture of *Pilate's Wife's Dream*, the grim cross in the foreground is waiting for its load; and then, away in the far distance, that same cross is the centre from which glory radiates. A kindred vision broke on the eye of the dying Jesus. From the cross He looks forth on the blessed fruits of His soul-travail. That word, "*It is finished*," which announces the completion of the most stupendous undertaking the universe has ever witnessed, and the perfected demonstration of God's love to man, tells what He saw in the future. It is the shout of the conqueror over the battle won.

In all this what a disclosure of love there is! "He loved me," the penitent, pardoned sinner says, "He loved me, and gave Him-

self for me." "No one ever loved thus, nor did anything so truly good and great as the Bible tells us of Him ever enter into the heart of man. . . . He went about doing good, yet He had Himself no place where He might lay His head; He spared no pains and refused no shame—He humbled Himself even unto death upon the cross, that He might finish His work; He came into the world to save the world; He was therein scourged and tormented; and He departed thence with a crown of thorns upon His head. Didst thou ever hear of such a thing, and do not thy hands fall upon thy lap? It is truly a mystery, and we do not understand it; but it comes from God and from heaven, for it bears the stamp of heaven and overflows with Divine mercy."* And this love of Christ is the love not merely of the Man Christ Jesus,

* Matthias Claudius.

but of the eternal God who is revealed in Him. It is one of the sorrowful things of to-day that so many are ignorant of this love. It has never entered their hearts as a blissful reality. This is one reason why the world is so bleak a place; why there is so much disappointment in it; why the burden of life presses down so heavily on men; why the smile of peace is so rare a thing; and why there is so often in human virtue the mere varnish of outward morality.

Having given Himself to a malefactor's death, His body would naturally have had ignominious burial; yet from an unforeseen cause, He is laid in a tomb which a rich man had prepared for himself in a garden close by. There He lay till the morning of the third day. On that morning He rose from the dead, and shewed Himself alive. Over a period of forty days He gave many infallible proofs to His friends that He lived; and at

the end of the forty days, He led them out by well-remembered paths to that sweet, secluded upland which lies beyond the Mount of Olives, above the village of Bethany, and there, in the very act of blessing them with uplifted hands, He was parted from them and was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God—angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him.

Since the last of the New Testament books was written, His power has been widely and wonderfully displayed. "A Jew is King," said the first Napoleon, "a Jew who died as a malefactor." It is even so. Down these eighteen centuries—as I read history—He has been the real Leader in all that makes for mercy, pity, truth, and love. I see His power throughout these centuries in the taming of fierce and barbarous races, in the growth of knowledge and righteousness, in the widening of freedom, in the framing of

more just and humane laws, in the deepening of reverence for conscience, in the revolt against slavery, war, cruelty, impurity, in the recognition of human brotherhood, and in great and holy lives which He has created. Multitudes past numbering have been saved from sin by Him; He wears the name that already is above every name; He is making many righteous; the pleasure of Jehovah is prospering in His hand; and no limit can be set to the wonders of the future. Not merely shall He create an oasis here and there, with green palm trees casting a pleasant shade, and singing birds, and wells of springing waters, where pilgrim bands may rest and chant their hymns of thankfulness, but the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. And when He surveys His new creation in its completeness, clad in garments whiter than snow and purer than the purest

light, His soul shall have a joy ineffable, measureless, Divine. He has already shown His hand, and foreshadowed what He means to do. Already we anticipate the promised hour—

> "When at His feet shall lie
> All rule, authority, and power
> Beneath the ample sky;
> And He shall reign from pole to pole,
> The Lord of every human soul."

Nor must we suppose that the spiritual influence of this manifestation of grace reaches only to the children of men. May we not believe that other worlds and other orders of being share the joy of it, and are moved by it to the exercise of a deep and delighted admiration? "To this narrow spot that we occupy," says Dr. Thomas Chalmers, "the King of glory hath bent His mysterious way, and entered the tabernacle of men, and in the guise of a Servant did He sojourn for

years under the roof which canopies our obscure and solitary world. Yes, it is but a twinkling atom in the peopled infinity of worlds; but look to the moral grandeur of the transaction, and not to the material extent of the field upon which it was executed —and from the retirement of our dwelling-place there may issue forth such a display of the Godhead as will circulate the glories of His name amongst all His worshippers. . . Humble as the tenement may be, deeply shaded in the obscurity of insignificance as it is among the statelier mansions which are on every side of it, yet will the recall of its exiled family never be forgotten, and the illustration that has been given here of the mingled grace and majesty of God will never lose its place among the themes and acclamations of eternity."

What shall we say of the marvellous con-

juncture of coincidences between this prophecy of Isaiah and the New Testament account of Jesus? Is it possible that one could have worked out the harmony by setting himself to do so? Must not the very attempt—founding empire on rejection and death—have defeated itself? Are not the coincidences between the prophecy and the career of Jesus too numerous, too deep, too varied, too much *sui generis*—is not the harmony too large and spiritual—to be the result of accident? Have we not here lock and key, prophecy and its fulfilment? Can we help conceding, "These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory, and spake of Him?" Do not prophecy and New Testament history correspond with absolute precision—not in the mere letter, but still more evidently in the spirit? And can we think it strange that, being the Christ, the Saviour of the world, He should be thus fore-announced? Nay,

would it not have been strange; even to mystery, if God, speaking through the prophets on other subjects, had been silent *about HIM?*

With the light of prophecy from the one side, and the light of history from the other, thrown on Jesus of Nazareth, is it possible to invalidate the conclusion, "This is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world?" And if He is the world's Saviour, need any man perish in his sins? For that name "Saviour" is no mere courtesy-title; He is called Saviour *because He saves.* This was His very errand into the world, for which He was appointed and qualified by the anointing of the Holy Spirit; His delight, His glory, the very satisfaction of His soul. He never put a case past Him as hopeless. He is "mighty to save,"—"able to save to the very uttermost." He despairs of none. His salvation meets man's need at every point. He saves from

that numbness of conscience and spiritual apathy in which they are content to remain, like men overcome by the numbing power of frost. He saves from the condemnation of sin. Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but through the ever-availing sacrifice of Calvary there is pardon for the very worst. He saves from the fears and distresses that sin infers, so that we have a peace that in very deed passes all understanding. He saves from the old alienation from God in which we once lived, so that now we joy in Him, being "brought nigh" by the blood of the cross. He saves from the love of sin, so that we hate and abhor it, and are pained if we yield to it. He saves from the bondage of sin, and introduces us into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Christ's salvation is not the mere breaking of bonds and delivering from death. It is not as when one comes on some wild animal caught in a snare,

and undoes the snare, and lets the panting, struggling thing return to its wild freedom again ; but as if he tamed it, and made it love him, and follow him, and do his will. So does Christ with those whom He saves ; He makes us the glad captives of redeeming love, and our will learns to stand and wait on the Blessed Will, like an angel continually beholding the face of God. He saves from the pollution of sin, and makes us "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." And, finally, He saves from the very existence of sin. That is the consummation of His work —when, having kept us from falling, He shall "present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy."

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